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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE DARING YOUNG MAN _____ Grace Lund '41	5
<i>Illustrated by Grace Enright '40—Facing page 5</i>	
BETTER FOR HIM _____ Cecily Engelhardt '40	12
PROLOGUE TO THANKSGIVING (poem) _____ Grace Lund '41	19
CLOTHES MAKE THE WOMAN _____ Shirley FitzGerald '40	20
"DEIRDRE" (poem) _____ Irene Mahoney '41	27
INHUMAN STEEPS _____ Dorothy Zwier '41	28
"GRIEF AND I ARE NO STRANGERS" (poem) _____ Catherine Rickert '41	34
THE HOUND OF HEAVEN _____ Lorraine V. Gould '40	35
CAN THIS BE FINITE? (poem) _____ Irene Mahoney '41	40
OUR ART IS OUR OWN _____ Grace Enright '40	41
IN DEFENSE OF IMAGERY (poem) _____ Shirley FitzGerald '40	47
DUST CATCHER _____ Grace Lund '41	48
PROPAGANDA—AND THE GUILD _____ Cecily Engelhardt '40	61
THE INEVITABLE _____ Marilyn Brophy '42	66
HAVE YOU A COMPLEX?—Editorial _____	71
—AND IF YOU'RE READING _____	73
ADVERTISEMENTS _____	85

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WILLIAM SAROYAN

G. Enright

The Daring Young Man

A Dali in the Drama

GRACE LUND

WILLIAM SAROYAN is at once a realist and a reactionary against realism; a subtle painter in expressions and a simple word-technician; at one and the same time he writes a short story, essay and prose-poem. He also writes plays.

Saroyan was born in 1908 in Fresno, California, of Armenian parents. In Armenia his father had been a professor, a learned, respected man. In America he worked at picking fruit. In his spare time he wrote in Armenian. None of his works were ever published and his son never learned Armenian but some intangible bond must have existed between father and son to fire the child to write.

For by the time Saroyan was eleven, he was not only writing stories, but formulating rules. The trouble with the old rules was that "they had been leaving me out, and as far as I could tell I was the most important element in the matter." Rule number one came when he "had just been sent home from the fourth grade for having talked out of turn and meant it. 'Do not pay any attention to the rules other people make,' I wrote. They make them for their own protection, and to hell with them. (I was pretty sore that day.)"

Saroyan's early life reads like a hackneyed success story of the early 1900's. He began working at the age of nine, selling newspapers, and left school at fifteen to help support the family. But here the pattern changes. Instead of adher-

THE QUARTERLY

ing to the Horatio Alger formula of Making Good at no matter what, but nevertheless, with Dauntless Ambition, Saroyan has spent his time, from the cynical age of twenty-one, at avoiding work. "It interfered with his writing," staid "Who's Who" unbends to explain.

Since then Saroyan has written what must amount to a roomful. He set upon himself the minimum of producing at least one short story a day and consequently has had short stories published in more American magazines than any living author.

Saroyan's works are pervaded by this dogma more strongly than any author was ever influenced by a predecessor. Shakespeare the Great was so influenced by the writers who unwittingly assisted in his plays as to make his works a mixture of thoughts, potent but impure. Everything Saroyan writes is unadulterated Saroyan.

This may be due to his lack of formal literary education. Never having studied the classics, he did not recognize their good points when he was still bothered by such trifles as style and so did not imitate them.

Saroyan's phrasing is clear-cut, without superficialities, patterned in a mathematical economy and rhythm, "highly polished and slick as a green onion to the teeth." There are no superfluous words, no bow-tied clauses and as little punctuation as is decent. I have never read a style so gloriously unadorned, with the exception of the Bible.

In a preface written in 1934 Saroyan broadly divides style into two classes: a writer "can write in a manner that implies that death is inevitable, or he can write in a manner that implies death is *not* inevitable. Every style ever employed by a writer has been influenced by one or another of these attitudes toward death."

THE DARING YOUNG MAN

Saroyan himself believes that life is inevitable. Along with this he believes in the innate goodness of man. He is a paradox of a realist.

Every definition one makes of forms of literature must be modified if it is to include Saroyan. So realism must now be divided into two schools.

There is the school of Hemingway and Steinbeck, the physical realists. These authors write of men's vices, of the gruesome denominator to which man has reduced man. This is the realism of the senses. If they have a motive, it is to reform the world by revealing its ugliness and sin. Seven hundred years ago Dante swore his life would be devoted to the same method of betterment.

Saroyan is the uninhibited herald of a new realism. He too is aware of the physical failings of mankind . . . of practically every man. Yet that does not make his heroes and heroines morbid or repugnant. For where other realists either forget or ignore the divine fire, Saroyan has endowed every one of his sympathetic characters with an untarnished spirit. And so the second form of realism—as earthly and poverty-stricken and no-money-to-get-married-on as the first type—carries with it a ray of hope that lifts out of the gutter and sets it, clean and good, among the things that make man a superior being.

It is good for an author to patronize truth; and may not he deduce that which he sees and experiences to be true? If he sees bread and sunrises instead of wretchedness and despair, is he not a realist as much as any morbid sensualist? Is he any the less observant because he is dazzled and held by the godly goodness of men instead of by their likeness to animals?

“Place in matter and in flesh the least of the values, for

THE QUARTERLY

these are the things that hold death and must pass away. Discover in all things that which shines and is beyond corruption."

This awareness of stars over mud does not make Saroyan a naïve Pollyanna. Contrariwise, he gives the impression of having lived in the world . . . sixty minutes every hour and no short-changing . . . and of enjoying it. He has seen the world and has found it not ugly, nor purely beautiful, but lovable. One can imagine him shouting exuberantly of the world, as did the "Marco Polo" of William Rose Benet:

"Let them laugh if they will, let them say what they say—
I have seen Cathay! I have seen Cathay!"

This perception of goodness and beauty is his philosopher's stone. It is the basis of Saroyan as a man, as "an act," and as a writer.

Saroyan's words are difficult to synopsise or paraphrase. Everything he writes is in its simplest and most effective form. One finds himself remembering whole lines—pages of the exact words.

The same is true of his recent play "The Time of Your Life." It is simple, effective, unforgettable. In the first act one can almost see the author challenging himself to make his omnipresent theme of man's universal goodness outbalance the atmosphere of a sordid setting. The first act is devoted to establishing the visible tawdriness of props and people and the last two acts to uncloaking their intangible loveliness of spirit.

It is one of the few plays I have seen wherein theme, not plot, is of overwhelming importance.

THE DARING YOUNG MAN

"In the time of your life, live—so that you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it."

The scene is a "honkytonk" cafe in San Francisco. The action—breathlessly incessant and all bound to the theme—revolves around a sane, humanity-loving, champagne-drinking "student" who sits like Socrates in the midst of confusion, unknotting difficulties with calm judgment and practical wisdom.

There is just enough plot to stretch over three acts, but there is thoughtful material sufficient for at least a dozen well-fed plays. For William Saroyan does not write of transient, superficial whimsies, but of grand, eternal ideas.

There is a heroine—very lovely and in distress, and her lover—stalwart, sincere, slightly intelligent. There is also a lying cowboy, an ancient Arab who believes that there is "No foundation. All the way down the line." Also a proprietor with "personality", and a vicious villain; plus, of course, Saroyan's philosophy in the person of Eddie Dowling in the person of "Joe."

The serious events are relieved by pleasant comedy and in this Saroyan shows himself a superior craftsman. For the play, remembered as a whole, represents the "chequered shade" of tragedy and comedy, time and eternity, body and spirit—well-proportioned to each other.

At once *The Time of Your Life* conveys the elation of heaven and the disillusionment of hell, both pinned to earth by good-natured comedy.

Though the setting and the characters are externally tawdry, one leaves the theatre feeling as if he had walked through a spring day. Was it Aristotle who said, "Drama should be a purging of the emotions"?

THE QUARTERLY

The effect of this play is even more surprising when one recalls that Saroyan wrote it within six days after his last play, *My Heart's in the Highlands*, was produced last year. *My Heart's in the Highlands* dealt purely with the theme, "A good man is better than a bad one. He just naturally is." This was illustrated by a hungry poet and his family, without the melodrama incidental to *The Time of Your Life* but with a tender, poetical tone, convincing withal.

Theatre Arts Monthly recalls, "No two critics were in agreement when *My Heart's in the Highlands* was put on last year as to what the fable meant—almost all of them found it a strangely touching and moving piece of work that evoked a quality of beauty rare to any stage. How that quality depended on the thought and content, the cadence in speech and phrasing, the obscure rhythm of deep feeling that was part of the writing itself—is impossible to say."

William Saroyan made his first deep impression upon American consciousness five years ago with *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*. This is the story of a young man dying of starvation—swinging to God on a flying trapeze. It is written in a Dali-esque surrealism of words.

"Horizontally wakeful amid universal widths, practicing laughter and mirth, satire, the end of all, of Rome and, yes, of Babylon, clenched teeth, remembrance, much warmth volcanic, the streets of Paris, the plains of Jericho, much gliding as of reptile in abstraction, a gallery of water-colors, the sea and the fish with eyes, symphony, a table in the corner of the Eiffel Tower, jazz at the opera house, alarm clock and the tap dancing of doom, conversation with a tree, the river Nile, Cadillac coupe to Kansas, the roar of Dostoyevsky and the dark sun."

All his characters are simple, philosophical, good people

THE DARING YOUNG MAN

without inhibitions to hinder their virtue. "Sometimes," he writes, "I get mean and I make man out to be a rotten, worthless, unclean thing. It isn't mean, but I make out as if it is. It's something less tangible, but for mockery it is more convenient to make out that it is man. It's my business to get at the truth, but when you start to mock, you say to hell with the truth."

He believes there are two kinds of writers. The first spends his life telling his friends and himself that he is a writer and finally dies, having written nothing. The other works by Saroyan's method. "I call it the Festival or Fascist method of composition." It consists of putting down one word at a time without bothering about style.

Advice to writers and living things goes like this: "Try to learn to breathe deeply, really to taste food when you eat, and when you sleep, really to sleep. Try as much as possible to be wholly alive, with all your might. . . You will be dead soon enough."

Saroyan's faith is his outstanding quality. His boundless faith in himself almost equals the smugness of Shaw and his faith in things is the touchstone of his success. He is, like one of his characters, "Very faithful in belief in the innate goodness of things. I am not speaking of faith in God. I am speaking of faith in things. Maybe it is the same thing."

In one of his story-essay prose-poems Saroyan says, "I am studying timeless and contemporary idiocy in man and in myself, and timeless and contemporary poise and dignity in beast, plants, rocks, rivers, seas, and myself and I am translating the universe, time and space, pneumatics, size, relativity, sleep, anger, despair, energy, motion, sound, texture, memory and many other things into English. So far I have written one word . . . God." It is a beautiful beginning.

Better For Him

CECILY ENGELHARDT

— for she had so little time

MARIA came out of the doctor's office and walked slowly down the street. The air was crisp and cold and the wind beat against her face. It was a biting nasty chilling wind, and it made people hurry indoors. But it didn't make Maria hurry—it couldn't. These other people could rush—they could hasten time. But she, she Maria, had to stretch her time. She had to make it last, the hours, the minutes, the seconds—there was so little left—so very little. The small victrola in her brain kept screaming at her, kept screaming "Maria,—one year Maria, just one year and then . . ."

This voice, this thin, shrill, piercing voice tried to make her hurry. But she didn't, she walked slowly along, shivering a little now. She walked on until she came to a cafeteria, and through the steamy windowpane she saw people rushing about with trays. It was lunch hour, and all the trays were laden with food. Food—once it had had a meaning for her—once it had been used to feed and to nourish the human body—hers. Now she wasn't hungry—she wouldn't be anymore. She would never eat again. With the tears streaming down her cheeks, she turned away—the little victrola went on—"Yes, Maria," it said, "it's futile to feed a temporary storehouse—to nourish a sanctuary that soon will crumble—crumble, Maria, to little pieces."

It wasn't until she was home—until she had thrown herself down on the bed and cried and cried as if the tears

BETTER FOR HIM

would never cease flowing, cried until she thought her heart would break that she felt anything near reality—any relief at all.

"God," she prayed, "please help me. Please don't let it happen. I'm young—I'm only twenty-four and there's so much left to look forward to. Please, God, don't let me die. I can't die—not now. There's Jeff—and he's waiting."

She got up then and walked over to the dressing table. She picked up a picture of a young man dressed in white flannels and a sports shirt open at the throat. He was smiling—really laughing up at her. He was laughing at her because he didn't know. But if he did know—

She looked at the girl in the mirror, the girl with the dark hair and the dark eyes and the tear-stained face. "No," she said, "he mustn't—and he won't know. He might stop smiling."

Maria could never stand to have Jeff not smiling, not laughing. Because when he wasn't—well, he was different. He wasn't Jeff—he didn't belong to her. He was strange and unreal. And she didn't like this stranger. She was no part of him—there wasn't any love in his eyes for her.

She thought now of what Jeff always said, "You know darling, if I ever lost you, I'd never be happy again. I'd never smile anymore—there just wouldn't be any reason to."

Maria put the picture down with a soft thud. "You waited Jeff," she said. "You waited until I grew up; you waited till I was through college; you waited until I realized you were waiting—until I realized that I cared. And I do care, Jeff, and we're not going to wait—not any longer Jeff—not for anything."

She went over to the closet then and began to go through the dresses. "Darn Connie!" she thought; "after rooming

THE QUARTERLY

with me for three years you'd think she'd keep her clothes on her own side. If she took the blue silk . . . " But then she saw the blue silk dress and took it out and laid it on the bed.

She was feverishly excited and wild thoughts kept racing through her mind. "Tonight Jeff," she said; "tonight we'll do things your way. We won't wait for the organ, the orange blossoms, the flimsy veil—the things I wanted. No Jeff—we won't wait another three months—until March. That's too long to wait—besides it's—well never mind. We'll slip away.—Tonight we'll slip away and we'll forget everything—our plans and—well, everything. Besides it's fun to upset plans. Just like this wedding business. We had that all planned—and, after all the planning, it's not going to happen at all—well not the way we expected. You never know how things are going to turn out—do you? Maybe sometimes when you think something is going to happen like—well maybe it won't happen at all—that's possible isn't it—isn't it Jeff?"

Maria stopped musing for a few moments while she applied lipstick to an already scarlet mouth and rouge to pale cheeks—cheeks almost too pale for any coloring. "I'm coming to you Jeff," she said, "and it's not fair—not fair to you, Jeff. But you've been waiting—waiting so long. And I want you, Jeff—I need you. I'll make you happy, too. . . . Even if it's only for a little while," she added. She picked up her bag and gloves then and went out quickly.

All the way down in the taxi she had felt nervous and jittery. Now as she stood before his door waiting for him to answer the ring, she said to herself: "Don't be silly. This is Jeff you're going to see and he loves you. There's nothing to be afraid of—nothing at all."

BETTER FOR HIM

Then the door suddenly opened and a tall young man stood before her. She was startled at first but then he smiled—and she went into his arms.

"Darling, what's the matter? You're trembling."

"Oh, I'm all right—just a little chilly, I guess."

"Well, gee, I'm glad to see you. But what are you doing here, honey? I thought you told me that you were going to be out all day today with Aunt what's-her-name—"

"Well, I was out this morning, but I got home early."

"Oh, and you couldn't resist seeing me. Darling, I'm overwhelmed. Miss Clarkson, may I have your hand in marriage?"

"As a matter of fact, Jeff, that's what I came to see you about," Maria said.

Jeff pushed her down into a chair then and stood over her glaring ferociously. "Now, Precious," he said—and she could hear how he tried to be gay, teasing, flippant—"if you postpone our marriage one day—just one day—mind you, I'll put you on the floor and jump on you, yes jump, until I break every bone in your fragile little body. Do you hear me?" he shouted.

When Maria kept staring up at him, just staring, he knelt down beside her and took her hand. In an unbelievably gentle tone he said, "O. K. honey, shoot."

Maria couldn't look at him—she just couldn't—so she looked away and said "You've got it all wrong Jeff—I don't want to wait. Jeff, will you marry me—tonight—now?"

Then she looked up at Jeff and he had the most startled expression on his face—dumbfounded she supposed you'd call it. For a minute she thought he was going to laugh—but he didn't. That's what she loved most about him, she guessed—his sensitiveness to another person's feelings.

THE QUARTERLY

He spoke then. "You're not fooling, Maria," he said, "I know that. But why? I'm afraid I don't understand, honey. Maybe I'm just dumb or I don't know what. But why tonight? It doesn't sound like you—it isn't reasonable."

But Maria didn't want to be reasonable—and give explanations. She had had it planned. They'd just go away from everybody—from everything. Jeff was supposed to be happy—to be ready to drop everything—to go with her, not to stand there asking foolish questions.

"Of course," she said, pushing him away and rising, "Perhaps I shouldn't have come; perhaps I was too presumptuous; perhaps I took too much for granted. Of course, if that's the way you feel . . ."

Jeff pushed her back into the chair, "Now listen to me, Maria," he said, "let's get this straight. I love you and you know it. And we had it planned to get married in March. I wanted to get married sooner but you said no—so we waited. Now all of a sudden you come in and calmly say you want to get married tonight. And just because I act surprised you immediately get all huffed up about it. Darling, I love you more than you'll ever know but tell me the truth—tell me why you came tonight. Was it because you wanted to get it over with—because if that's the way you feel . . ."

Maria was crying now—softly. "Oh, Jeff," she said, "it's not that—I love you so that I just didn't feel like waiting—not any longer."

"Darling," Jeff said, as he took her in his arms, "you don't have to *tell* me that. I've felt that way so much—so long." He kissed her then, tenderly, and she relaxed a little.

It was she who spoke first. "It's all right then?" she asked in a whisper. "We can get married now—right away?"

BETTER FOR HIM

Jeff held her away from him. "If only we could," he said.

"But why, Jeff—why can't we?"

"You funny little girl—did you ever hear of a license? You know they have such things don't you?" he teased.

"But Jeff," she said, "I thought we could just drive up to Gatesburg and get married. Why that's what Jimmy and Doris did—don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes, I remember," Jeff said, "but that was three years ago and you can't do that any more—it isn't legal."

"It isn't?" Maria echoed nervously and she stared up into his face, hoping he would deny it—hoping it wasn't true.

"Nope—But I'm sorry darling, for I feel that way too," Jeff said. "But it will be all right. Next week we can get married."

"Next week," Maria whispered so that he scarcely heard it. "Another week gone—time is going by—so quickly, too quickly for me."

But Jeff was going on "You see honey, Johnson, you remember the sandy-haired fellow I introduced you to in the office—well he's in the hospital and I'm doing some of his work. So, you see, I couldn't make it this week anyway. Darn that guy! He would decide to get sick at a time like this. But gee, maybe . . ."

"What's the matter with him, Jeff?"

"With whom—"

"With Johnson."

"Oh, some lump on his hand—it might be cancer they think."

"Oh Jeff—no. It can't be."

THE QUARTERLY

"Yeah, some of the fellows from the office went down today."

"Didn't you go, Jeff?"

"No—I couldn't. Gee, I feel sorry for him all right but I can't stand sickness—it makes me ill just to go near a hospital. I can't go near anybody like that—it gives me the creeps. It'll be better for him, for everybody—his wife too—if he dies now, instead of hanging on."

"Jeff!" Maria screamed. "Stop it—stop do you hear—I can't stand it."

"Gosh, honey," Jeff said, "I'm sorry to have upset you. But you see how even talking about a thing like that can get on a person's nerves."

Maria went over to the couch and sat down. Her hands were icy and the lump in her throat so large that she could scarcely speak. But she managed to say, "I have to go now, Jeff—it's getting late."

"Aw gee," Jeff said, "you've just come—stay awhile."

"I have to go," Maria repeated now, rising.

"Well, all right," Jeff said, "if you really must. Wait I'll get my coat."

"No, Jeff—I'd rather you didn't come."

"But darling—"

"No Jeff—please. It's all right. I'll take a cab."

"Well if you really don't want me to." Jeff knew better than to argue with Maria when she got in one of these moods. "Why the devil," he said to himself, "did I have to mention Johnson. But I didn't know—Oh, she'll be all right tomorrow."

Maria started for the door. He followed her to kiss her goodbye. "Just wait until next week Mrs. Jeff—" but she put a finger to his lips. He took her in his arms then, but

PROLOGUE TO THANKSGIVING

she was cold and stiff. He teased her—"You feel like a corpse."

Maria drew back quickly. Lord, he was being cruel—but he didn't know. She looked at him, and it was an effort for her to keep back the tears. "Goodbye, Jeff," she said. She looked back for one look—one last one. He was smiling. "He's smiling—smiling because he doesn't know"—and then in a whisper which scarcely reached her lips—"and now he can keep on smiling."

Prologue to Thanksgiving

Whan that November with its windes faire
Hath discontented clerkes everywhere
With their devoirs, and the calendar
Showed that Capricorn was not far;
Whan latoun-colored Phebus waxed olde
And cider smelled ful good in the crispe colde
And Lucina there sheene in all the gloame
Thanne longen clerkes for to goon home.
And teachers for their natif towns to see
And maunciples in herbewe to be
And nonnes be longen for a quiet space
For clerkes mak much noise about the place.
And specially from every dorm and hall
The clerkes to the tea-room flock they all
To carpe murierly of turkey and of traines
And how slowly time intervening wanes.
Thanne one day noone whan sweet Angelus soundes
Nor clerke nor teacher is there on the groundes.

GRACE LUND

Clothes Make the Woman

Fabrics from Fish

SHIRLEY FITZGERALD

WHEN Cleopatra sat before her famed dressing table, put green paint under her eyes, black antimony under her lids and lashes, tinted her face, hands, and feet with henna, she could not know that she was participating in the first fruits of the chemistry which had its origin in Egypt. The Egyptians, being workers of experience, skilled in metals, glass, and pottery, employers of dyeing and tanning materials, used the Greek and Eastern speculation on the material nature of the world to give impetus to one of our indispensable sciences.

Thales, of Miletus, worshiping the Nile, declared the origin of all things to be water, and for decades this was thought to be true. So he, with Empedocles and Parmenides, sang the natural philosophy in verses which became the foundation of modern chemistry.

Democritus, with his description of the atom, let fall clues of the secrets of the composition of matter, which in the hands of the Renaissance scientists laid the basis for modern physics. Yet we are quite right in realizing that Democritus, theorizing on the nature of the physical world, had no such scientific notion in mind when he formulated the plan.

Women have always been part of the growth of chemistry. The interest in beautification was as widespread in Egypt and ancient Greece as it is today, when every magazine is filled with the advertising of beauty second hand.

CLOTHES MAKE THE WOMAN

Cosmetics and clothing: the one a part of chemistry from its very origin, the other associated with the science only within the last century.

Primitive man used the skins of animals he had slain to protect his skin. In the course of time, leaves were fastened together, and pounded bark was used to make garments. When the value of the sheepskin was discovered, fibers were plucked from it. Cocoon and cotton-ball both gave themselves to be twisted together and woven into cloth. Now the modern woman is a composite of so many chemical compounds in her external make up that it would exhaust a page to list them.

Her shoes may be of a crystal-like substance out of which furniture can be made; her stockings are of a cobweb variety in which ladders cannot form; her gingham and velvets are so processed as to neither stain nor wrinkle; her best evening dress and the buttons on her latest frock may have been made from milk; her jewelry, from synthetic resins. She wears clothes dyed from the tar-barrel which has brought color and comfort to mankind. From the ugly tar are her most fragile perfumes which now contain a fixative to make them last,—from tar the despised by-product of the past!

So many astonishing transformations have flashed into being from the wand of industrial research that the twentieth century sophisticate is apt to take startling new achievements for granted. His stand may be one of studied indifference: a "very-interesting-I-guess-they-have-something-there" attitude that keeps him far from being enlightened.

You would be ashamed to admit that you were ignorant of the author of the current best seller, the newest swing tune, the best play on Broadway. So you had better learn

THE QUARTERLY

at least the family names of these wonder chemicals, for they are sure to cut quite a swath in chemical society.

Although you may wonder how glamorous a girl can feel in an evening dress tagged "genuine castor oil and coal," you will understand how we can manage to look "wide-eyed and innocent" as Paris has decreed. How else could one look in clothes made from glass, wood, milk, coal, aluminum, fish, and limestone?

And since some three hundred million pounds of synthetic fibers were made in the United States last year, perhaps we should be able flippantly to trip on our tongues those chemical names by which mysterious plastic substances take on new importance.

Synthetic wool was first developed in Italy where commercial production is now under way, Italy's motive being to find a wool substitute and thus avoid the need for importing large amounts of natural wools. It is a mere digression, of course, to remark that this war-scare motive has been an important factor in many chemical developments abroad.

Known as lanitol, this wool is made from the casein in milk. Skimmed milk is coagulated with acids, or with pectin which our mothers use to jell preserves, and out of the curds casein is obtained. This is used for its protein content and so synthetic wool has been made experimentally out of many other proteins, the soybean being used in the United States. Even the utterly fantastic notion that a dress can be made from fish loses its absurdity when one knows the high protein content of fish.

The Science Service is sending around the world an exhibit "Fabrics of the Future" which contains a dress woven of a combination of this synthetic wool and natural fibers. The casein in the dress cost only fifty cents, a fact which

CLOTHES MAKE THE WOMAN

helps to bear out the truth that new chemical creations are not hit-or-miss, but are conceived to meet real needs. The result of a chemical advance that has affected millions of people is the perfection of rayon. Today, rayon if converted entirely into dress goods, would provide seven dresses for every woman above the age of fifteen years!

But to anyone who reads *Life* magazine, to anyone who has seen the du Pont exhibit at the World's Fair, the remarkable new product, Nylon, has had its appeal. Silk-like fibers that make beautiful and amazingly tough stockings, fashioned from the elementary building blocks—coal, air, and water—are the first fibers man has truly created. What about rayon and the new wool from cow's milk?

Chemists answer that nylon is the only one strictly synthesized by science. Rayon's basic material is the cellulose of trees and cotton, and therefore not created in the real sense of the word, for organic materials are used. So, too, Italy's lanitol wool from casein is really a chemical rearrangement of protein. Glass, metal and asbestos fibers can be called physical fibers because they contain some original mineral material whose shape and sometimes appearance have been altered by physical means.

But in the creation of nylon chemistry has started out with a trinity of substances and built up by an intricate process a material that can be spun into fibers finer than silk, stronger and more elastic. Although the hose will not be on the market for a year to come, a few experimental pairs have passed astounding tests. In one case a girl wore a pair of these hose twenty days with sandals and walked in beach sand. At the end of the trial the hose showed no appreciable wear to this harsh abrasive treatment!

Scientists of the E. I. du Pont de Nemours Co. have

THE QUARTERLY

been granted patents for these nylon stockings, and they claim for their creation the virtues of being virtually wrinkle-proof and of drying extremely rapidly. Characterized by high tensile strength and high resistance to moisture, the fibers show extraordinary opposition to ordinary solvents. They can be washed repeatedly with little effect.

Two nylon-making plants are now under construction, one at Seaford, Delaware, for textiles, the other at Belle, West Virginia, for other products made from nylon. Some of these products have already appeared: toothbrush bristles, sewing thread, fishing lines, and parachutes. Yes, our national defense experts have approved its use for parachutes wherein the strength and weight of the material holds the thread of a man's existence. Need we be slow in adopting nylon with such proof of its strength?

Yet in the spirit of modern research, it must be said that nylon, as good as it is, as spider-web fine as its fibers are, will be improved, a thought which might lead the imagination almost anywhere.

The clothing of her body has always had a fascination for the average woman, from the folds and draperies of the statuesque Grecian woman, to the flounces and frills of the Southern belle. And glass has proved useful now in the production of a new fabric for the whim of a woman. After glass fiber had been used for insulating material for some time, someone started twisting even finer glass filaments into a thread. Consequently we have a heavy, lustrous cloth looking like the damask from the French looms of a generation ago. It is in the experimental state yet, is too heavy for dresses, and will not dye well. But watch its progress.

Exquisite gems known in the world from earliest ages have enhanced the loveliness of women for centuries, but

CLOTHES MAKE THE WOMAN

it is only the woman of the twentieth century who wears bracelets made from coal, air, and water. Even synthetic "glasses" are made from acrylic resins, vinyl resins, polystyrene, all transparent synthetics: the family names that are in the Who's Who of the chemical world.

Lighter, less brittle, more flexible than the familiar glass from sand, this "glass" can be made water-white and transparent. Spectacles made from the grandfather of synthetic resins, born of two disinfectants, phenol and formaldehyde, and its later variant made of urea, are clearer than optical glass.

Particularly you should know poly methyl methacrylate which goes into commerce here and abroad under a long list of trade names. "Lucite" du Pont calls it, while Röhm & Haas label it "Plexiglas" and "Crystalite." So clear and brilliant is it, that one of its principal exhibition pieces consists of a huge "diamond" that would weigh fifty-seven thousand carats if really carbon crystal. You may have seen it at the World's Fair and mistaken it for glass, which is twice as heavy.

The term "poly" is found repeatedly attached to the chemical names of these compounds, and it is interesting to discern the reason. Meaning "many," it refers to the joining of many identical molecules together. Stringing along, they link chemical hands to form the useful compounds. Like a line of people playing crack-the-whip, they become an amalgam in this process which chemists call polymerization. Products are polymers, and in this category we find all the newer synthetic "glasses."

Not to be outdone by nylon, lucite has been used for bag handles, transparent heels and platform rims for evening slippers, besides being adapted for operation instruments.

THE QUARTERLY

These convey a heatless white light from a bulb in their base directly to the parts of the body under observation. In hospital operating rooms, light has been so "piped" experimentally, because of lucite's ability to transmit light around bends and curves, a distance of ten feet. Homes of the future may contain transparent furniture from cellulose acetate plastic that is lighter than glass, yet can hold the weight of two heavy men. And with the use of lucite, perhaps no visible light supplies will be needed.

Rubber fibers have been found ideal as elastic threads for clothing since they do not deteriorate rapidly in the fiber form. While in solution these fibers may be dyed various shades and can be coated with a covering of silk, cotton, wool and various rayons and woven into elastic cloth.

Men have not been overlooked, either, for the well-dressed man may now wear trousers whose woof has been interwoven with rubber fibers which will hold the crease, never bag, receive no spot nor stain, and are absolutely wrinkle-proof.

But seeing the effect of indefatigable research only on the production of materials, does not promote our intimacy with the chemist behind the scenes. For twenty four hours a day an endless stream of coal pours into the chemical factory of Belle, West Virginia, and transformed it emerges as more than one hundred different substances: ammonia for refrigeration, alcohol for anti-freeze, synthetic plastics, and the super-rayon of the future.

No less than one hundred products, running almost the whole gamut of chemical and physical characteristics, are made from three simple things: coal, air, and water. No less than five hundred thousand compounds of carbon are

"DEIRDRE"

known today, and chemists say the possible total may run to millions of millions.

Dr. C. M. A. Stine, vice-president of the du Pont Co., summing up our advance in the march of chemistry, shows us that we have not been inferior to the European nation: "more than two hundred thousand compounds wholly new to man have emerged from the chemical laboratory in less than a quarter of a century in the United States."

And so Cleopatra, whose nose, had it been shorter, according to Pascal, would have altered the whole aspect of the world, with her dyes and rich robes cannot compare with the woman of today who can wear the crystal slippers of Cinderella and dresses made, fairylike, from fish.

Inspired by W. B. Yeats' "Deirdre"

Deirdre; wild, beloved of Naisi,
How starless was that night when you and he
With last-time looks so plain in both your eyes
Knelt close in unity, and tried to rise
As if would come more nights, another dawn.
Forgetting still that in the bright of morn
There would be new-drawn swords, fresh tears,
and death.

Deirdre, trying to calm your sobbing breath.
Naisi, silent in righteousness and sorrow,
Trying to hide his fear of no tomorrow,
Seeing his pain, Deirdre, you sought to make it less;
And so you sat with him and played a game of chess.

IRENE MAHONEY

Inhuman Steeps

DOROTHY ZWIER

—beyond the loneliest star

November 21, 1939

Friday Night

RANDY DEAREST:

The air is damp here and it's snowing in this twilight. Martha just brought in my tea and said the streetlights winked on and that it is very beautiful out in the cold. Can't you see her replying to me even though she hasn't a sensible thought in her brain? Footsteps are crunching, crunch, squeaking on the packed glistening snow. They make me remember how as a child I earnestly pressed my nose flatly and defiantly against the freezing window pane of our front door; then wistful and silent I watched the swift slanting lines of heavy twirling snow flakes as they trembled down to blacken the pavement with moisture.

You were sad too, Randy, (how long ago was it we talked of such things?) sad with a thousand unspoken, undefined wisdoms of a child. And each snowy night became an impression, a symbol of loveliness and mystery and a hushed something that permeated your being. And it was God's gentleness we felt and didn't know, yet dreamed it on.

But, Randy, we've gone so far beyond that only the faint essence of such a simplicity is remaining. I know, Goofus, I know. We have to find it in a printed word of poetry and say, "Ah, yes, I understand that; I was that once",—but that was long ago. I have no such self-surrender now. . . .

And yet, Randy, yet something happened to make my life—all our lives—seem flat and somehow devoid of intense pain and sacrifice and passion.

INHUMAN STEEPS

Maria came home from the hospital a week ago tonight. She is not the girl you knew—even physically. Let's see, it's been six years since she was at the lake, hasn't it? Then you knew that following winter that she married Harrison after her brother died and she was alone. I think he had her hypnotized—that's the only word I can think of. I don't have to mention how we recoiled at the thought of marriage, *marriage* to that pudgy, self-made, cigar-smoking, little man. I've tried to analyse and understand a million times why, why, why? Psychology is my only alternative, and that leaves my thoughts still ungrounded as dandelion-down blowing in the wind. But you know how recklessly idealistic and eccentric Maria was when she was eighteen, that Howard was her world, and when he died, she simply shattered her design of living; and that when she lost those stocks that Cary was managing, she took the estate from him and went to Harrison. That was the beginning of a long and horrible five years that were so nakedly realistic that they seem hideous nightmare now even to me.

It's because you really know Bill Manishe that I decided to write you the story, Randy. I know you'll understand and I'm going to ask you to help me, to help Maria, and to help Bill without his knowing. May God help us all! My hair has turned whiter in this past month trying to figure it out.

Maria is blind. The right side of her body is paralysed. Her mind is so keen, her perception so poignant, her sensitivity so subtle that I—oh, I might as well admit it, I'm afraid to go near her. And I think she knows. Believe me, I'm trying my best, but I can't keep the pity out of my voice and the sympathy out of my actions. And she doesn't ask for anything anymore. I feel almost as though I were

THE QUARTERLY

intruding on some sacred silence when I go into her room. During the day, when not in bed, she lies very white, still, her breast hardly moving with breath—lies covered in her chaise-lounge with a white satin quilt and the warm whiteness of the sun. She says she does not think of the past. Sometimes she prays for Bill—and for me. She said, "My life, Dorothy, floats on the perfume of those roses. . . . Bill's roses. . . . I must be as clean as their being, as rich in myself as their beauty, as deep as their fragrance . . . and as patient for death as they rest immovable and certain to the same end."

That's the real Maria now, Randy. She has come so quickly to the finality of life, to maturity in a pain and a love and a sadness that no one can really understand. She has two things left, her faith in God and the inspiration of Bill's flowers. I don't think he realized the fullness this expression of his love has incurred in Maria. The last day he saw her, you see, he promised that a flower as perfect in form and ideals as he could never be, would be at her side as long as she lived . . . because she would not let him be there.

But I suppose you're wondering what destiny Harrison found. I must tell you soon now, for I have already interrupted this letter for dinner, and I'm very tired. It is growing colder—the ashes are pale on the grate.) Harrison has died. He killed himself in trying to kill his wife. They were very unhappy together; he was so jealous, practical, so demanding; and she, aesthetic, lovely in youth, so idealistic, she saw him only after a year of marriage. And she maddened him by escaping far from him in her mind.

"You're mine," he used to tell her, "but your friends aren't, and I won't have them here all the time." So blunt after a little while . . . a denial of her individuality.

INHUMAN STEEPS

Then they travelled on her estate's assets and I heard nothing from her for two years, until she sent a letter from Rome telling me laconically that she and Harrison were coming home and opening the place on the island. I was to come out to see her.

I stayed two months of the spring that year with Maria. She would not let me leave; you know that. I did not really tell you anything of them in my letters, for I was not free to do so. Even you must not know that the master of the house drank, drank, drank, and treated only his two setters civilly. And Maria used to sit alone through the hours in the drawing room playing the piano fiercely, hauntingly, as a refuge. The "Baccarole" tantalised him; she loved it. There were rare visitors. One was Bill.

Funny, that your cousin should so tie up into our family life. He brought a certain peace with him, and we all became quieter and somehow less conscious of the seriousness of that life, so real, so melodramatic, nevertheless. Bill was straightening out Harrison's business, and consequently Maria's. I think Harrison saw in him the qualities he really admired in a man, qualities that he once thought he had himself—that he would have liked to have possessed. Bill stayed on; Maria seemed less strained and even let me go to my own room to sleep at night.

A gentle spark of her spirit returned. Slowly, softly, an understanding enveloped the two. I don't think Bill felt a sorrow for her; he appreciated and reacted to her mind only too well. He taught her to live away from the ordinary, in rather an abstract world which was only a shell after all—and a shell that exploded in all our faces. Her tiny joys, her music, her fine attunement to nature first; then her heart's desires, her misery, her humility and restraint all came to Bill. And his very presence seemed to give the answers.

THE QUARTERLY

One day I met them coming across the field. All the long grass was bent by the wind chasing them down hill. It rippled in a shimmering wave. Hand in hand, they were laughing and Maria's eyes were pure again; but I glimpsed the future, damp and brooding, beyond the fleeting joy in Bill's.

Then the night before I left, we three were in the living room. My book was gaping open and unread; Bill, half asleep, was in the deep chair near the fire, Maria happily fingering the piano. I can still hear the echo-music of that lullaby lingering on the quiet. Then someone sarcastically said, "Very pretty. In fact the whole set up is. Good evening, Dorothy." Good evening Bill. Or isn't it so good now that I'm here? And my beloved wife looking never more beautiful. Will you kiss me, my dear? No? Then I'll kiss you—later." Harrison minced across the carpet like a cat in his precise movements. He smiled. He was cold sober and proceeded to stare at me.

"What are you inferring?" I didn't even recognize my voice.

Maria's hands fell in discord on the keys, and Bill shot out of his chair.

"See here now, Harrison, will you let . . ."

"You," he bellowed, "you get out of this house tonight!" His flabby cheeks trembled in rage, and I thought he would seize an andiron to heave at Bill. "You're never to set eyes on my wife again. Do you understand? Hah, you didn't think I knew what was going on around my house. And you," he leered at me, "you spy, meddling into other people's affairs. I wouldn't even let you pat one of my curs. It's because of you that she's been away from me. We were all right until she started getting your precious letters.

INHUMAN STEEPS

I read some of that tripe—love, sacrifice, harmony of spirit, honoring individuality—tripe!”

“And on what do you base your marriage?” I found the superhuman courage to glare back at him.

His words were level, a dead tone, “She had money, and I desired her.”

Maria was shaking and Bill went to put his arm about her shoulders. I do not remember all he said to Harrison; I could not listen to him clearly. I sat watching the log sparks spit down into the fire bed; and they seemed fateful as they died for they reminded me of a dream I had dreamed repeatedly. There was a pack of Russian wolves loping, running down an iced snow slope. Each was small and each tiny body was a perfect pale pastel. There was the sorrow of grey and the liquid of amber, a mist of blue and a sea of green, the light hope of yellow and the life-blood of red. They came upon a river; each swiftly jumped and each dissolved in its blackness to a whiff, a puff of white mist that rose, spread, and was gone into the air. I shivered for I felt that tonight someone, something would change our lives and that all of us, one of us, would be gone too.

I heard Maria whisper, “You’d better go, Bill.”

He touched his lips to her hair. He stalked out of the room. As I followed him, I heard Harrison say as he took Maria’s hand, “I think we’ll take a drive. I have the roadster . . . you like the roadster . . . the moon is shining . . . you love the moonlight. We’ll go to the beach . . . you love Crow’s Cove, and I’ll love you—there.”

I could swear to this day that she screamed as I closed the door. I simply could not turn back. Then, Randy, on the way out Maria said he moved to touch her while taking

THE QUARTERLY

the dirt road's curve (you remember the steep one). She was thrown and grabbed the steering wheel.

Four months later the doctors told me she would not die and I could take her home, to my home preferably.

She had sent Bill away the week before. He had strength, but she far transcended all our desires to make her happy. She knew as well as we that that could never be. She has told me that never will she forget the thought Bill left her; that to him she was always walking, like the subject of Chesterton's poem:

detracts /
effect -

"Up through an empty house of stars,
Being what heart you are.
Up the inhuman steep of space
As on a staircase go in grace,
Carrying the firelight on your face
Beyond the loneliest star."

in footnote?

Watch Bill when he comes to you Randy; he is as deep and stark now as the mysteries of the world. I do not know how long Maria and I will go on. Good night, my Randy—

HELEN

any line?

"Grief and I Are No Strangers"

Often have I held Grief's hand—
While Death, her chill companion, stalked with one of my
own,
Grief and I were left behind,
Wringing hands, weeping tears.
We have walked together, Grief and I—
Down lonely country roads, in city streets—
Exchanging thoughts, and asking answerless questions—
Grief and I are no strangers.

Light from London streets

The Hound of Heaven

LORRAINE V. GOULD

ONE of the greatest achievements of Catholicism in the nineteenth century, an age of materialism and voluntary darkness, came from the pen of a physical wreck, a material pauper, and an undisputed misfit. This man was Francis Thompson.

Our hearts may leap in pity for a man who seemed to be such a hopeless failure; yet must they sing in praise of the spiritual insight with which this failure apparently endowed him.

The Hound of Heaven may seem to be a bold title, a daring metaphor, a glorious meditation. But the bold title and the daring metaphor do not in any sense render this poem an enigma. It is not the work of a semi-pagan, or a semi-Christian dilettante, but the cry of a man who, as each of us, once having felt the soul in contact with a superior force, the strength of Divine grace, learned that there is no substitute for this grace, and knew that Christ spoke truly when He said:

Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,

I am He whom thou seekest,

Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.

As a religious work, it stands for past, present, and future, claiming equality with the Psalmist in range of tone, with St. Paul in passionate strength of argument, and with St. Augustine in sublimity of thought.

An inquiry into the author's life reveals that as a child,

THE QUARTERLY

he was indeed a precocious one. At seven he was reading poetry and, as Everard Meynell tells us, "overwhelmed by feelings of which he knew not the meaning, had found his way to the heart of Shakespeare and Coleridge." His early childhood was happy enough, but it was when he was sent to school that in his own words: "his long tragedy of early experience began."

He was never in the sense a school boy; rather he was a boy at school; a boy, shy, introverted, unable to cope with the normal course of the environment into which he had been placed. His parents had intentions of training him for the priesthood but his temperament, plus the fact that he was physically not eligible for the calling, crushed their hopes. And so his father sent him to Owens College to study medicine. This, and a subsequent attempt at making a soldier of him, failed; and, eventually, we see Francis a young man, ill, indolent, indifferent, drifting about the streets of London, sinking from menial occupations, such as boot-black, cab-caller, match vender, to gradual starving poverty.

He himself, groping and seeking in a fog of wretchedness, was the greatest contributor to his own misery. But, although surrounded by sordidness, Thompson never became a part of it. And in this desert of gloom grew the fruit of his genius—*The Hound of Heaven*.

With the publication in 1888 of this work, the mists of his mental anguish lightened; physically he became stronger and began to take a place in literature. Wilfred Meynell was more to Thompson than just his publisher; he and his family became life long friends to the poet and gave him the hospitality, love, and encouragement of which his life had been so devoid; yet despite this, the ravages of his suffering left their mark upon him and he remained to the

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

end of his days a victim of indolence, unpunctuality, and the possessor of many disagreeable qualities.

Like St. Francis of Assisi, Thompson possessed a mellifluous voice, detached manner, and no money! But, while the poverty of St. Francis was intended, Thompson's was accidental; yet both were poor and profound.

To many *The Hound of Heaven* is autobiographical. This is so in a general way, without doubt, merely from a review of the author's life; but to make a detailed scrutiny of the lines for evidence of this or that incident of his life would be quite beside the point.

That the poem is autobiographical is exactly its most striking appeal—since it is autobiographical universally. It is the story of any soul—of you, of me. And it is this intensely human element that gives it such universality.

The first fifteen lines give the whole sweep of the poem and connote the final resolution, that the soul is ever fleeing from God in its search for happiness, but it finds its entire happiness in God. The soul seeks happiness constantly, ever fleeing from God, even trying to lose itself in the vagaries of thought, "labyrinthine ways of the mind"; in sorrow, in joy, trying to hide from God; fastening on hopes only to be hurled into disappointment and fear; and all the while the soul flees, God pursues:

... those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.
This subtle refrain suggests the poise of the Pursuer.

start "I fled Him
down" - better?
T. and here?

THE QUARTERLY

Such oxymorons as "deliberate speed" and "majestic instance" make us realize that God is not a pursuer, impetuous, but rather one persistently patient, and all-wise.

And so the soul cries in its loneliness to other hearts, knowing all the while the love of Him who pursues—yet the thought: "Lest having Him, I must have naught beside," terrorizes the soul and it seeks a compromise wherein it might love God in the creature and love the creature too. If, when the soul endeavors to love at "one little casement parted wide . . . the gust of His approach would dash it to."

The pursuit continues; the soul is followed across the "margent of the world" to the "gold gateway of the stars." The soul, under stress, pleads for quick change—

I said to dawn, Be sudden; to eve, Be soon—

With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over

From this tremendous Lover!

(How the adjective "tremendous" makes us feel the fullness of eternity.) And thence follow lines of astounding imagery wherein are such phrases as "whitling mane of every wind," "long savannahs of the blue," "plashy with flying lightnings," and again the refrain:

Still with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbed pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instance,

Came on the following Feet,

And a Voice above their beat—

"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

The soul turns next to seek happiness from little children, and for a while enjoys the solace of their charms; yet, as they look up, it seems that their guardian angels snatch them away.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

Lastly the soul relies on nature:
I laughed in the morning's eyes . . .
Heaven and I wept together,
and again, the wonderful figure:
Against the red throb of its sunset heart
I laid my own to beat
And share commingling heat.
But, after a time, the soul learns:
. . . we know not what each other says
These things and I; in sound I speak—
Their sound is but their stir; they speak in silences.
And a third time comes the subtle refrain:
Nigh and nigh, draws the chase,
With unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
And past those noised Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! Naught contents thee, who content'st not Me."
Then begins the awakening of the soul. It stands
amidst "the dust o' the moulded years" and realizes its days
"crackled and gave up in smoke." Comprehending God's
deathless strength in a bold metaphor, the "amaranthine
weed," the soul sobs its halting, half-reproachful doubt:
Ah! must—
Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn
with it?

Then enlightened, it vibrates to the power of the thought
that the Designer infinite must *char* the wood—not tinge,
not taint, not destroy,—but char, only that he, "of all
man's clotted clay the dingiest clot," may know the un-
worthiness of this creature housing the soul God seeks. And

THE QUARTERLY

the soul then appreciates that all taken from it was for its own perfection and yields to the Almighty embrace:

All which I took from thee I did but take,

Not for thy harms,

But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.

All which thy child's mistake

Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home;

Rise, clasp My hand, and come.

At the divine invitation the footfall halts,—and the pursuit has ended. No longer does the soul flee before the Hound of Heaven—no longer does it fear “Lest having Him it might have naught besides”; for now, in having Him, it has All. It sought happiness; it now has happiness—all happiness, all truth, all perfection in the realization that its gloom was after all:

Shade of His Hand, outstretched caressingly.

Can This Be Finite?

Can this be finite;

This light-filled point of ecstasy . . .

Grasping clouds 'til both my hands are filled . . .

Dancing from star to star,

Not noticing the deep black space between;

Filling my ears with silence

And with song that must have been

The music of Titania?

You tell me this is not eternity . . .

It is a finite thing . . .

A moment of escape . . .

And soon the silence and the song will stop

And all the stars grow cold

With gaping holes between.

Our Art is Our Own

Realism versus flights of fancy

GRACE ENRIGHT

MAN has divided time into periods and eras. He has tried to confine the most fluid of all things into compact masses, each representing a phase in his own history. In his vain attempt he has determined this marking of time by the most passing, transient things known: great personages, fleeting but influential moments which change the course of a nation, mere circumstance. There is, however, another thing almost as limitless as time itself, which has in its own peculiar fashion marked historical epochs. Without naming eras; Empire, Victorian or Renaissance, these same periods would remain stable; we simply studied their art without consulting names or dates.

Politics change as conditions change . . . sometimes improving, often hastening degeneration, but always remaining a shallow surface gauge of the spirit of the time. Art, on the other hand, comes not from a single man, nor yet a group. It comes, no matter when nor where, from the soul of the people, a depth never plumbed by any other medium save music. Then to get an impartial view of our own times, the type of view people fifty years from now will have in retrospect, we will turn not to politics empassioned by prejudice and hate, nor to business conditions. These are too near for us to look upon them with calm and seeing eyes.

We will, instead, betake ourselves to art galleries and shops and include not only the fine arts, but also flights of

THE QUARTERLY

fancy, from architecture through home furnishings to improbable hats. For convenience and simplicity let us confine ourselves to contemporary painting. Here we will find feelings poured out by people everywhere, not only Americans, but all people, influencing each other, meeting on a common ground which recognizes no boundaries.

Art in this country has taken on a "typically American" flavor, and although foreign artists take their places here, the dominant note is struck by native Americans. This imparts a bit of the spirit of today for at few times in our history have people been so intensely conscious of their country, its advantages and its preciousness to them. Everywhere artists are stressing their locale; they no longer look backward to tradition, but thrusting root into the land they know and understand, they strive to picture it and its nature to others. There are for example the New England artists and the Middle Western artists who have made the respectable church elder and the haggard sharecropper equally famous. These two schools, widely dissimilar, are nevertheless typical of their environment. They are present products of the evolution of the past two hundred years.

At first glance, the prolific work of our contemporary painters seems to vary widely in technique, philosophy, and subject matter. It appears that we have here the culmination of individuality, for in no other period have painters struck out so daringly, defying tradition. This alone, is a reflection on the general movement of today. In every field and in every individual mind people are beginning to feel about for ideas with which to express themselves . . . personality development is stressed as never before.

Individuals are trying to be just that individual, different. In some cases there has been no improvement, but it is

OUR ART IS OUR OWN

at least a breaking away from hidebound convention in thought—it is a setting free of pent-up thoughts and actions which can identify their owner only when they are free. Of course, there have been individualists before—they have always existed wherever there was a mob to be ruled—but this decade has seen the greatest spread of the individualistic spirit in history. It has traveled out into the masses and illuminated them. True, every man inspired by the desire to reveal his innermost convictions in no uncertain terms has not set the “hoi paloi” agog, but has instead added to his particular niche in the scheme of things.

The present day painters have sought to reveal themselves by various methods, many of which have been used before. Some have done it blatantly by distortion of abstraction, or by creating a sort of cacophony of color; others by using sincerely the earnest directions of their mind to guide their work. These will be ageless, for by sincerity and truth, their work will never follow the path of all fads. But, by whatever means the painter achieves his end, he signifies the widespread urge toward individualism.

However, delving beyond the discovery that individualism represents one of man's strongest cravings, today we find that beneath the differences lies a common end—the search for reality. Have you noticed how the word *reality* has been bandied around? It is used not only to convey a meaning, but to support any theory or work which lacks a better foundation. Reality has been the aim of artists from the time of the cave dwellers, but until now, it has been striven for in a more or less innocent manner. The object of the painter was to emulate to the best of his ability and training the object in nature. Now, as everything else, it has become suddenly involved. It necessitates devious

THE QUARTERLY

methods and intricate technique to portray realisms in capitals.

The theatre has gone hand in hand with fine art and has tried in the past few seasons to outstrip her, for the stage has resort to language, and a creation of so-called realism by words has been brought to a peak. To be fair, though, it must be admitted that painters are, on the whole, quite sincere in their attempt to put reality on canvas. They try to go through the accidental, to the real; sometimes their efforts appear objectionable, even ridiculous, but all the quirks and foibles are for a purpose.

It is well to remember that portrayal of the real is not a camera-like, slavish copy of nature. There is nothing quite so lifeless as an exact painted reproduction of the real thing. The painter's work is to enhance nature, to create an illusion of the thing which is nearer to nature than its appearance. This trend in art is paralleled in every field of endeavor, especially the theatre, as has been mentioned and in current literature. The depression victim has been set forth in types, biographically and autobiographically. His story has been told on hundreds of canvases. He is presented stripped of illusions, bereft of security.

Perhaps when noticing all this interest in the seamy sides of life, one might wonder if this is a false reality which is now so earnestly pursued. Does reality consist of the unpleasantly sordid? Is it delusion to admit that in reality there exist happiness and comfort? All this is considered bourgeois propaganda, evidently, for reality must be stark, dramatic, tragic. This viewpoint seems in accordance with the present time when there is so much interest in labor and social uplift. No one is interested in the financially secure, except for what will happen to them when they lose

OUR ART IS OUR OWN

their security. The pauper it is who dominates the scene, and with his presence looming so large, no wonder comfort seems a wretched, sugar-coated sedative, far removed from the harshness which is life.

Even the surrealists, those worshiped and ridiculed beings, profess to have reality at heart, seeking the psychological explanation and ignoring the sensible aspects, contenting themselves with dreams and time and space. Some disdain to disguise the wooden artists models used for postures and draw them as such, achieving a peculiar, dummy-like type of work, which if wrongly interpreted is fanciful and meaningless, but really truer than some of the more aesthetically pleasant.

A glance at the exhibition at the World's Fair affirms this viewpoint and brings to mind, more strongly than any of the other exhibitions, probably because of its size, the presence of a depressed attitude which parallels the reality question. The exhibition contains many worthy compositions and some whose absence would never have been missed, yet, after going through that vast amount of pictures, one comes out, glad to get back into the sunshine, feeling unpleasantness at the experience.

From a purely personal point of view, it seemed that the symbol of that exhibition might be found in a huge painting of a crucified negro, head drooping, sagging heavily on his cross before a darkened sky. That modern crucifixion represents all the tragedy and suffering which is so widespread, which the others are trying to achieve. In its wake followed scores of homeless families, of workers and all the other approved subjects of the modernists. It seems rather obvious that these painters enjoy the mournful and forlorn and take it very seriously. In fact, this is another reflection

THE QUARTERLY

of the general populace, for, although we cannot say that people today do not have a sense of humor (everywhere we see evidence of that) they have a very human tendency to take themselves seriously.

Caricaturists draw amusing, mocking sketches of others, but there are few self-caricatures. Introspectiveness, too, is at a new "high" and painters are in the fore where it is concerned. True, this has always been so of artists, but there is nothing very light in art today. Perhaps this is an unfair stand to take since it is hard for one to take that which he creates lightly. But slight impressions of humor, or might we call it perspective, would open up the eyes of many an ego-bound artist or business man.

In viewing modern art we must constantly note that art is not static; what is true of today will not hold for tomorrow, for the very principle of art is advancement. It will move on, changing and indomitable. Some say we are fast traveling toward another Renaissance, and one might be inclined to agree, for great art is born ultimately of painters such as we now have. Perhaps it is not these who will be great, but from their groping and experimentation, heights not yet dreamed of will be taken.

We are at present a troubled people; our art is particularly our own, but with time passing, healing, and changing, a new era will eventually evolve, one whose art again will catch its spirit and portray its feelings. This possible state is dependent on us, for every phase of our time will influence it. We are not only of the present, but of the future as well.



In Defense of Imagery

One said that color failed to be alone
A world of thought to claim the mind of man.
One cried that tints and tones were dead
To stir a spirit's thirst for the unknown.
No tapestry of word with word entwined
Could ever hold a place upon that ridge,
The mountain pinnacle . . . poet's renown . . .
If sober meditation were not there.

Do you believe a frieze of pictures such
As these should be trod 'neath the tarnished dust
Because exalted here is nought but light?
For light which cradles all in molten sun
Gives us our breathless glimpses into life.

Of crimson fields which flame and burn in day
And slag to ash by light of star-cut sky
I sing. Of copper haze which polishes
The cobalt day 'til as a jewel it seems
Set in a burnished glow. Of fronds and ferns
Patterned with rust, vibrating sun, and rain
Which, iridescent, winks its radiance
To us in each trembling and tear-like world.

Of these I sing, nor do I hang my head
Because intensity of thought profound
Cannot be found in shadows sleeping on
Some moss-greened stone, lichen brown, or in
The time-worn rush of battered blue and white
That is the sea. Colors have life as well
As symphonies which echo spirit's moods.

SHIRLEY FITZGERALD

Dust Catcher

--wherein plaster serves a purpose

GRACE LUND

CHARACTERS: PAULINE SCHMALTZ, *a girl of about twenty.*

She wears an afternoon dress of uninspired black.

MRS. SCHMALTZ, *Pauline's mother. She is stout, middle-aged, and dressed without regard to fashion or color.*

MR. FUDDY, *the man across the hall, a mild, thin man with the stooped shoulders common to a bookkeeper.*

(He wears only a vest over his shirt.) ~~no pants~~

THE MAGAZINE SALESMAN, *not much older than Pauline but, in contrast to her, is visibly satisfied with himself. He wears a rough tweed suit and carries a black notebook.*

THE SUPERINTENDENT, *a middle-aged man of swarthy complexion. He wears a dark shirt and trousers and a battered felt hat of unusual shape which he never removes.*

MIKEY, *approximately the same age as Pauline. He wears slacks and a sweater.*

SCENE: *The living room in the apartment of the Schmaltzes, somewhere in the Bronx. The two side walls are obliquely convex from the back wall. There is a window just off center, back, and to the right of it a couch with a small table on either side. In the wall, left, are two doors, one leading to the outside hall, one to a closet. The wall, right, has a doorway in the center without a door. This leads to the rest of the Schmaltz apartment. There is an upholstered chair near the door; to the right*

DUST CATCHER

a small plaster statue of Cupid on a dark wooden pedestal. The rest of the furnishings are left to the discretion of the producer. Lying around the room on various articles of furniture are strewn Pauline's knitting and several colorful prizes (such as dolls and Chinese lamps) from the shooting gallery.

TIME: *The present, one Saturday afternoon.*

When the curtain rises we see Pauline sitting on the couch, her feet tucked under her, frowning over a book with a vivid cover. Mrs. Schmaltz enters from the right wearing her hat and carrying her coat, bag and gloves. She stands in the doorway and, setting down her gloves and bag on a table, shrugs into her coat, looking at the statue of Cupid. Occasionally she looks at Pauline, as if about to speak, but apparently thinks better of it since Pauline does not take her eyes from her book.

MRS. S. (*pulling on her gloves*). Never was there a man so good in the shooting gallery as your papa, Paulie. You should be lucky you got him for your papa. (*She looks expectantly toward Pauline, but receives no reply.*) I told Mrs. Garrity from down the street about him winning the statue of Cupid. My, my, it's beautiful! "What good is it?" she said. H'm, who knows what good it might be?

PAULINE (*with irritation*). It looks like a grinning idiot. Any minute I expect it to fall off the stand. Just a dust-catcher—that's all it is.

MRS. S. I don't know what's the matter with you lately, Paulie. All the time you find something wrong about everything. It's not right you should be such a sour puss all the time.

THE QUARTERLY

PAULINE (*sulkily*). I'm not a sour puss. And don't call me Paulie!

Mrs. S. You're not a sour puss? What kind of a grouch are you then? Why don't you read your book?

PAULINE. It's a lousy book. The butler didn't do it—the girl with the blond hair was found with the gun.

Mrs. S. It sounds like a wonderful book to me. Then why don't you finish your sweater?

PAULINE. I knit the sleeve on the neck and it don't fit.

(*Mrs. Schmaltz stands for a moment by the door, silently rummaging in her bag. Pauline lets her book slide to the floor and pulls her feet from beneath her.*)

PAULINE. I hate being alone! I might as well be on a desert island for all the fun I have. Nothing to do but sit around and stare.

Mrs. S. You got plenty time to run around yet. Be glad I always know where you are. I don't have to worry none.

PAULINE. What fun is that? Gee, I've tried everything I know how but still I don't make no headway with Mikey.

Mrs. S. So it's Mikey now you want to make headway with? What happened to Mr. Goldman?

PAULINE. He's too old. And too slow. Besides, Mikey has nice wavy hair. He's handsome.

Mrs. S. Don't worry. And you shouldn't be lonesome. Don't forget to put the potatoes on at quarter to—and knock on the steam pipes if it gets cold. (*She opens the outer door, left, then turns to Pauline.*) Good-bye. Don't be a grouch.

PAULINE (*morosely*). Oh, good-bye. (*Her mother closes the door behind her and for a long moment Pauline sits on the couch, sullenly regarding her shoes. Then she gets up and goes to the window, pulling aside the "panel" to look*

DUST CATCHER

out.) Miles from everywhere this place is. . . . There's Mikey's house, the big goon. I wonder what he's doing. Maybe he's looking up here— (*She lets the panel fall quickly into place and her hand brushes the window sill. She inspects her palm and finds it dusty.*) Gosh, this place is like a stable. Don't nobody ever clean it? Well, I ain't got nothing else to do; I might as well start in. Where did I leave the dust rag? (*She goes to the closet, left, and emerges with a book.*) "How to Win the Man of Your Heart's Desire." A fine thing. (*Reading.*) "First you should let him know you are interested, but not too interested. Then you should pretend you are distant, but not too distant. Then . . ." A lot of baloney, that is. (*She throws it back into the closet.*) I even bought the "Midnight Sin" perfume it tells about—"just one whiff and you need somebody to protect you." Just one whiff and you need somebody to catch you is more like it. Phooey. I just ain't got no appeal. I guess I'll be an old maid. Like Old Maid Schwartzheim down the street. Homely like her too, all squidged up. (*She grimaces. Suddenly she remembers why she is at the closet and extracts the dust-cloth.*) Might as well get started. (*She runs the cloth over the window sill and then begins to dust the tables. She goes to the window and looks out again.*) Gee, I wonder where Mikey is? Maybe if I waved to him . . . (*She has pulled aside the panel and is waving industriously with the dust cloth.*) Oh, Mikey, why don't you come up and see me, huh? Why don't you ask me to the movies? My heart is breaking . . . (*At this moment her cloth flicks a useless vase from the table and it falls to the floor in fragments. She turns from the window and kicks it under the couch, then begins to dust Cupid.*) Cupid, huh? Stupid is more like it! What good did you ever do? (*She contemplates the statue. Her next words come*

THE QUARTERLY

deliberately.) Weren't you the guy who made people fall in love? Sure, they stick you all over valentines. Now you're only a dust-catcher. Or are you? Hey, could you make somebody fall in love with me? *(Pause.)* You could try, couldn't you? *(Pause.)* Okay, I wish that somebody falls in love with me—I wish that every man that sees me falls in love with me. *(Pause.)* Do I have to rub you three times like in the "Bloody Buddha"? Okay—one, two, three. *(She strokes the statue.)* Now, go on, make something happen. Even if you are plastered, see if you can do it. I dare you.

(The bell rings and Pauline opens the door. She stands aside and Mr. Fuddy enters hesitantly.)

MR. FUDDY *(nervously)*. I wonder could I borrow, if you don't mind— *(He looks at Pauline and there is an almost audible "click" as the charm works.)*

PAULINE. What do you want, Mr. Fuddy?

MR. FUDDY *(seating himself on the edge of the couch)*. Don't you want to come and sit beside me, Pauline?

PAULINE *(bewildered)*. Why should I? Oh, all right. *(She sits down, distantly.)*

MR. FUDDY *(after clearing his throat and moistening his lips)*. You're a very beautiful—that is, I mean, I well, I never noticed you before, Pauline.

PAULINE *(shocked)*. What! Why, we've been living here five years.

MR. FUDDY *(nervously conciliating)*. I know, I know. What I mean is—all of a sudden . . . *(he makes a clumsy grasp for her hand but Pauline sneezes at the moment and needs it herself)*. I—oh, Paulie, you're a wonderful woman! *(Pauline stares at him, mouth agape. Finally she comes back to earth.)*

PAULINE. Don't call me Paulie.

DUST CATCHER

MR. FUDDY. What shall I call you? To me you are more beautiful than Joan Crawford, than Greta Garbo, than Zasu Pitts. . . . (*He tries again for her hand and is more successful. Pauline looks at their hands and then at him, then back at their hands.*)

PAULINE (*annoyed*). For heaven's sake, pinch me.

MR. FUDDY. Oh, Pauline! (*He becomes flustered indeed, but is encouraged to move closer—perhaps a quarter of an inch.*) I could spend my life like this—just us alone. Will you promise to let me take you out? We could have hamburgers and look at the moon. . . . To-night!

PAULINE (*edging away from his lukewarm grasp*). John Fuddy! What about your wife? What about the triplets; John and Jonath and Johanna?

(*Mr. Fuddy's world crumbles about him. He despairs for a moment. Then he hopes again.*)

MR. FUDDY. Well, how about Tuesday night? My wife goes to her mother's for dinner and we . . .

PAULINE (*not realizing what he is saying*). What about the triplets?

MR. FUDDY (*ignited by a foreign spark of daring*). Oh, darn the triplets! (*He suddenly realizes that he has used profanity before a lady and is again flustered.*) Excuse me, oh, I'm sorry, honest. Don't be mad. Anyhow I'll put the triplets in a bureau drawer and close it!

PAULINE (*shocked*). What!

MR. FUDDY. Don't let a little thing like triplets worry you, Pauline. You and I are all that matter. Here we sit, two hearts beating . . .

PAULINE (*scornfully*). . . . around the bush.

MR. FUDDY. Yes, that's it. Two hearts beating around . . . (*frowning at her as he comprehends the meaning.*) No. Oh, the agony you cause my soul.

THE QUARTERLY

(The door bell rings at this moment and Pauline goes. She opens the door and we see the Magazine Salesman standing on the threshold, exuding confident personality.)

MAG. S. *(making his way through college—an English major)*. Madame, for a limited time only are we permitted to offer you a subscription to . . . *(He looks into her eyes, then seizes her wrist and pulls her into the room with him. They sit on the couch where Mr. Fuddy is still seated and, Pauline finds herself between the two men. The Magazine Salesman is ardent in every sense of the word. He leans forward; he attempts embraces; he kisses her hand.)* I know not your name, but what matters that? A rose by any other name would surely smell as sweet! *(He sees the dustcloth and throws it over his shoulder, capewise.)* I know, you are Juliet and I am Romeo. Ah, Juliet, Juliet, wherefore art thou? *(Mr. Fuddy looks behind the couch helpfully.)* Be mine! Be mine! The world is ours together. Come live with me and be my love. . . .

MR. FUDDY *(sarcastically)*. And you can take in washing, dove.

(The Magazine Salesman is suddenly aware of this animate bit of scenery.)

MAG. S. What's this? A rat, a cat to claw a man to death? Out, villain, out! *(He seizes Mr. Fuddy by the collar and directs him to a door.)*

MR. FUDDY *(wistfully)*. I go, Pauline, but not forever. *(He dramatically flings open the door and walks into a closet. He retraces his steps and sits down on a remote chair.)*

MAG. S. Why wait for spring? May is here if we will it!

PAULINE. Oh, Mr. . . .

MAG. S. Romeo is my name, of the accursed Montagues.

MR. FUDDY. Pauline, I wouldn't have a thing to do with

DUST CATCHER

anybody like that. Sounds like a gangster to me. And all those women he's hidden around. First Juliet, then May . . .

MAG. S. Shut up! (*To Pauline.*) Lady, I wear your colors. (*He indicates the dustcloth.*) Give me some encouragement. (*He has his arms around her and Pauline is trying to move away.*)

MR. FUDDY (*becoming conscious of what is happening, and going over to the couch.*) Now you leave her alone, you big—you big—you big jitterbug, you!

MAG. S. (*not deigning to notice the interruption*). One word, my fair one. Put back in place my bleeding heart!

MR. FUDDY. Pauline, do you want me to sock this guy?

PAULINE (*weakly*). Yes.

MAG. S. (*elated*). Ah, the word my soul requires! Now may I live again! (*He becomes more ardent and Pauline keeps pushing him from her with increasing annoyance. Mr. Fuddy rolls up his sleeves; then wonders what to do next.*) Ah, Juliet, thou forever mine! What a life! What a love!

MR. FUDDY (*discouraged*). What a mess!

MAG. S. Silence, varlet!

(*The doorbell rings. In full command of the situation, the Magazine Salesman leaps up and dramatically flings open the door, left. The superintendent sails into the room, shaking his fist at the magazine salesman.*)

SUP. (*enraged*). What's da matter? All da time you knock on da pipes. Knock on da pipes! What for you should want so many heat? It's hot enough here for roast a hot dog! (*He pulls open his shirt as proof.*) Diable! All the time you want the heat, more heat! In Paris we no got so much heat! Ah, Paris! (*He clasps his hands and looks toward the ceiling in ecstasy.*) There we ain't got no jam sessions either—no ya, ya, ya on the radio all night! And you— (*He*

THE QUARTERLY

menaces the Magazine Salesman.) I told you for no moochers allows in here! What for . . . *(He notices Pauline, standing with Mr. Fuddy, whose emotion has not become cooler. The superintendent is not immune to her charm.)* Ah, not since I left France have I seen such a beautiful woman! *(He pushes her back on the couch and kneels at her feet.)* Ah, you are la plus belle, la plus jolie, la plus—baby, you're some stuff!

MAG. S. What! A competitor! A scurvy foreigner to steal the damsel from my heart! Scram, pest!

SUP. *(rising from the floor)*. You want I should keel you? Maybe I should sock you on the beak!

MR. FUDDY *(enthusiastically)*. That's right, Tony. Bop him.

SUP. *(turning to his supporter)*. My name's no Tony. She's Francois! The last from the Dauphins! Ah, in France I would be prince—I dance with Marie Antoinette. Louis, he's a-say. . . .

MAG. S. What good do they do you? They're all dead!

SUP. *(regretfully)*. That's why I leave Paris. She gets so lonesome—all my old friends gone. Ah, sometimes I think of the spring. *(Remembering Pauline.)* I and you could walk on the Seine and smell the flowers—ah! I would show you Notre Dame, l'Hotel de Ville, la . . .

MAG. S. Bastille.

SUP. I would not forget it! *(Realizing what has been said.)* You are more low than le Metro. You—you stool-pigeon.

(Mr. Fuddy has exited right and returned with two of Mr. Schmaltz' rifles. He stands at the window, sighting objects outside.)

PAULINE. Oh, Mr. Fuddy, you shouldn't oughta play

DUST CATCHER

with Papa's guns. They're for the shooting gallery. He's very fussy—all the time he has to use his own.

MR. FUDDY (*grown very brave*). What do I care about papa? He's not more than twice as big as I am. A-hunting we will go. A-hunting . . . (*He attempts a song, twirling the guns on his fingers and frightening the others.*) Anybody who comes near Pauline gets it. Don't either of you lay a finger on her! (*Addressing the Magazine Salesman.*) You especially.

PAULINE. Now don't you go saying nasty things about Romeo. I want all you boys to like each other.

SUP. (*inanely*). Ah, that's cause I like you best! Once in Paris there was a girl like you. Matilde, her name was. Ah, she was beautiful like the rose. Sweet like the spring. She make you think of . . .

(*Unnoticed by the others the Magazine Salesman is trying his hand at finishing the half-knit sweater.*)

PAULINE. What became of her?

SUP. I got tired of her. There was a more beautiful girl. Ah, she was beautiful. Her name was . . .

(*Mr. Fuddy is still playing with the guns and has begun to sight the superintendent.*)

SUP. Whats'a matter with you? You want I should keel you? (*To Pauline.*) Ah, you most beautiful woman, tell me you weel go with me.

PAULINE. I have to wait to ask my mother.

(*The Magazine Salesman has cajoled the guns away from Mr. Fuddy. Pauline turns and sees him.*)

PAULINE. Put them down! They're my father's guns! Put them down!

MAG. S. (*brandishing guns nonchalantly*). I'm going to kill myself. That's what I'm going to do. You don't love me

THE QUARTERLY

and it's just no use living any more. This is the end. (*Orating.*) It is a far nobler thing I do than I ever did. (*He places one gun close to his head. Pauline holds her ears and Mr. Fuddy and the Superintendent begin some sort of tribal dance resembling the Big Apple.*) This is the end! Farewell, Juliet. (*He pulls the trigger and there is a disilluioning "click" of the hammer on an empty chamber. He is not disappointed, but falls to the floor. Pauline is relieved but the two men believe the Magazine Salesman dead and rush over to him.*)

SUP. Ah, it's pity he's dead. Such a pretty boy.

MR. FUDDY. Such a dirty rat, you mean. He took my guns!

SUP. You no call my friend names! I keel you. (*He grabs the other gun from the M.S. hand and points it at Mr. Fuddy.*) I keel you dead! (*To Pauline.*) Then we throw him in the furnace. Lots of heat, he's a-make. (*He aims at Mr. Fuddy.*)

MR. FUDDY (*valiantly, closing his eyes*). Pauline, it is for you I die. Take good care of the triplets!

(*The gun goes off resoundingly and, missing Mr. Fuddy widely, shatters Cupid over the floor. However, Mr. Fuddy thinks he is dead and collapses.*)

PAULINE. You've killed him! And poor Cupid isn't any good any more!

(*The Magazine Salesman has risen from the floor and, taking the dust-cloth off his shoulders, looks at it wonderingly.*) What am I doing here? Who are you? (*He realizes the situation.*) Oh, I remember. Madame, for a short time only are we permitted . . . (*He looks at Pauline foolishly, then backs through door, left.*)

SUP. Ah, you are the impostair! The Dauphin weel not speak with you! How dare you? (*He scowls in Pauline's*

DUST CATCHER

face.) I leave you—do not think I am sad. Once in Paris there was a girl more beautiful than the other two. She was so beautiful . . . ah! (*He exits, left.*)

(*Mr. Fuddy has regained consciousness and sits up. Pauline looks at him.*)

MR. FUDDY. I was wondering could I borrow a teaspoonful of vanilla. My wife is baking and—I guess you know how it is when you don't have any vanilla. (*He has become apologetic.*)

PAULINE (*looking at him uncertainly*). Of course, Mr. Fuddy. Come into the kitchen. (*They exit right, and re-enter almost immediately, Mr. Fuddy leading the way, carrying a teaspoonful of vanilla.*)

MR. FUDDY. Thank you so much. I'm sorry to bother you. (*Pauline opens the door left and he leaves. She surveys the wreck of the living room.*)

PAULINE. The wish sure worked. It's a good thing Cupid got busted when he did, though. Heaven knows what might have happened. Gosh, they made a mess of the place. (*She picks up the guns and puts them on a table.*) The darn fools. They don't have to clean it up. I wish they were here now . . . wasting all my time! I could have finished my sweater! (*The door bell rings.*) Gee, I wonder who that is. I hope it's Romeo. He was cute. (*She opens the door, revealing Mikey.*)

MIKEY. Hey, is your father home? I want to find out if he's going to the shooting. . . .

PAULINE (*disappointed*). Oh, it's you, Mikey. No, he ain't home. Why don't you come in anyhow and wait for him?

MIKEY (*coming in*). Yeah, maybe I will. (*He sits on the couch; she takes up her knitting.*) What are you making?

THE QUARTERLY

PAULINE. It's a sweater. (*She looks at it closely.*) That darn Romeo pulled out two rows!

MIKEY. Who's Romeo? I didn't know you knew any boys.

PAULINE (*scoffing*). Boys! Say, you should have come earlier. There were three of them here, fighting over me?

MIKEY (*interested*). Hey, honest? (*He looks at her carefully.*) Well, you ain't so bad looking at that.

PAULINE (*confident*). You're darn right I'm not bad looking. I'm twice as beautiful as all the girls in Paris. Men kill themselves for me.

MIKEY. Gee, they do? Hey, how'd you like to go to the movies with me to-night?

PAULINE. Oh, I might think about it. Maybe I will if there's nothing better to do.

MIKEY (*appreciating Pauline's charm*). Gee, it's nice to be alone with you. (*He slides over nearer to her.*)

PAULINE (*pushing him away*). Hey, where do you think you are? (*Mikey feels hurt, walks to the window.*)

MIKEY. That's my house over there—did you know?

PAULINE (*joining him at the window*). Oh, is it? I never bother looking out.

MIKEY (*lamely*). Well, it is.

PAULINE. Hey, here comes my papa. We better clean up the place. (*She starts pushing the pieces of Cupid beneath the couch and Mikey helps her.*)

MIKEY. Don't forget about the movies to-night.

PAULINE. I won't.

MIKEY. Your papa shouldn't be mad about Cupid being busted. It never did any good.

PAULINE. That's right. Just a dust-catcher. That's all it was.

CURTAIN.

A Word and New Apostles

Propaganda—and the Guild

CECILY ENGELHARDT

IT IS a funny word. It stimulates us; it starts revolts; it helps win wars; it makes men fight for almost any cause; it is associated almost inevitably with conflict, strife and struggle. And yet it is only a word—propaganda.

But ask anyone what it means, and they will make whispered comments on Hitlerism, Bolshevism, Fascism, Communism, or some other abstract “ism”. Almost always the term is thought of in a derogatory sense.

Ask an ardent Catholic if he perceives any connection between the Church and propaganda, and he will immediately clutch at his rosary and shout No! as if you had extended him an invitation to shake hands with Satan himself.

And yet Our Church uses the principles of propaganda. We Catholics may gasp. But why? After all, the word means nothing more than a concentrated movement for the propagation or dissemination of a particular doctrine or practice. Even as far back as the thirteenth century, St. Francis of Assisi went about the roads of Italy ringing a bell to attract a crowd, whereupon he interested the loiterers and stopped the busy passer with his gentle appeals for a deeper love of God and neighbor—Was not that propaganda?

And from the time of St. Peter and Christ's Apostles who preached to and converted the multitude, up to the parish priest of today with his Holy Name rallies, and the

THE QUARTERLY

missionary with his ardent appeals to the pagans—Are they not all propagandists?

But of course we must not get the erroneous idea either that propaganda is "all good." In many ways it is a feigned incentive to disintegration. And a disintegrated attitude never leads to right and rational action.

This is the sort of attitude that is especially prevalent in time of war. It is at this time that propaganda thrives on slogans and is based on a purely emotional appeal. It is in this sort of propaganda that anything goes from "Protect Your Country from the Tyranny of Aggression" to "Your Babies are Starving—Save Their Lives."

But the propaganda of the Catholic Church is different. It is propaganda—yes—but from a rational approach. We have supernatural knowledge, but we can reason to Our God—to our Ultimate Cause. We do not have to depend on stirring the congregation up to such a pitch that they will immediately flock to our doors. I do not say that we are entirely without emotion, but we do not depend on it exclusively.

We do not attempt indoctrination nor do we cloak the facts of our religion in glittering garments and meaningless symbols. We merely tell the truth and explain the tenets of the Catholic Church.

The most outstanding example of our method of propaganda with its rational approach is the Catholic Evidence Guild. It is not a form of Catholic Action—It is a Catholic Action, especially in the sense as defined by Pope Pius XI in an encyclical letter issued to the world in 1931, in which he defined Catholic Action as "the participation and the collaboration of the laity with the Apostolic hierarchy."

The principal work of the Catholic Evidence Guild is

PROPAGANDA—AND THE GUILD

to destroy the erroneous mental attitude of the street mobs they address, and to make them see that religion is not just an emotional thing based on personal feeling, but something rational, something appealing to the mind—and not something sensual. Until this is done there cannot be any permanent conversion. Of course, the guild members have to use propagandist methods—and they do. But they do their work honestly. They explain truth. They do not present their facts in complicated language and in abstract generalities. You see they are merely interested in converting persons to our faith.

Mr. Francis Joseph Sheed, prominent Catholic layman and one of the founders of the Catholic Evidence Guild, substantiates this statement by maintaining that the purpose of the Guild is not to make converts, but rather to take the ordinary man of the street and set him thinking—thinking about God. This may sound quite simple—but it is not.

These street mobs seem to have a perverted turn of mind. They have no respect for logic or common sense where religion is concerned. Mr. Sheed at one of his lectures in New York last year enjoyed citing an example as typical of this type of mind.

It seems that one night while he was lecturing on a street corner in England, he was being annoyed by a so-called atheist. Another man in the group, a burly fellow, not being able to stand his taunts any longer, told the little atheist that if he were in New York, he would not be allowed to hurl insulting remarks at the lecturer. Whereupon, the little atheist looked at the burly creature and said, "Thank God, I'm not in New York."

Other illustrations of this sort of illogical thinking were cited in the *Catholic World* about six years ago. It seems

THE QUARTERLY

that one questioner in all seriousness asked a lecturer—"How can you claim the Roman Church to be the One True Church of God when everyone knows your own people put Christ to death?" "How do you mean, sir?" queried the speaker. "Why weren't they Roman soldiers that crucified Him and wasn't Pontius Pilate, who condemned Him to death, a Roman?" "Certainly", replied the bewildered speaker. "Well, there you are," came the triumphant conclusion; "Romans, Roman Catholics, all the same thing."

And again there was the Protestant gentleman who proved to his complete satisfaction, as he thought, that the Bible came first, before the Church. "In the beginning was the word," he cried triumphantly from the back of the hall.

"Read on", cried the speaker.

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

"So the Bible became a man?" asked the speaker.

And that gentleman has been waiting for further inspiration ever since.

You see it is not easy to be one of these lecturers—to be patient and to be alert and to be a psychologist all at once. The work, therefore, is only undertaken after the most careful preparation and years of training. The members of the Guild who seek to qualify for speaking in public, study some specific subject and, after passing requisite examinations, are licensed to teach and answer questions on that subject only. In time they become more learned and experienced and are then authorities on other topics also.

You see, there is nothing impromptu or extemporaneous about their lectures. They do not give any superficial knowledge or expression of their own ideas. They give simply an explanation of Catholic doctrine and worship.

Mr. David Goldstein, well known convert from Marx

PROPAGANDA—AND THE GUILD

to Christ, who became known as the "Catholic lay Apostle to the man in the street", has been participating and collaborating with the Apostolic hierarchy by explaining Catholic doctrine to outside audiences since 1917. He and Mrs. Martha Moore Avery were the leading spirits in the organizing of the first Catholic street preaching movement since the Middle Ages.

With the approbation of His Eminence Cardinal O'Connell the street work began in Boston during the World War period. And the most recent development in the New York branch of the Catholic Evidence Guild, which is under the moderation of the Rev. Father Francis Le Buffe, S.J., has been the admirable address given by Miss Mary Shaughnessy, an alumna of the College of New Rochelle, to a New York street gathering.

This may not seem so wonderful an accomplishment to us. We say other women have addressed public gatherings. Yes, that is true. But these other women have not addressed a crowd of cynical disbelievers, a crowd ready of adversaries, a crowd of jeering hecklers who thrive on such questions as "Why can't priests marry?" and "Why aren't Catholics allowed to read the Bible?"

But these Catholic women and men of action do not mind straightening out twisted minds. They love it because they have a Cause—and they fight for it.

These modern Apostles of Christ, these devout Molders of His Fold, these Rationalistic Propagandists of His Doctrine, these people, who, in a word, believe in God, have one slogan—even if they have it subconsciously and without effort.

It is just a simple and God-like truth "that faith cometh by hearing".

The Inevitable

Conversation with a Dark Angel

MARILYN BROPHY

I HAD wished the composure but not the depression of the menacing solitude which encompassed my spirit in the darkness of the deserted room. The vacant wall adjacent to my chair and the warped floor below provided a compromising scene between the real world and that of the imagination, where the real and imaginary seemed to meet and each imbued itself with the character of the other. A terrifying yet pleasant sensation surged through my body as I realized my seclusion from the vast world of turmoil without. The stillness was almost audible. Some nightly pressure of helplessness bore down and by degrees I felt my spirit yield to the compelling force which invisibly issued forth.

The insurmountable solitude was checked at intervals by the snapping embers of a log fire which absorbed the chill of the autumn midnight and added to the sombre shade. Through the huge window before me, the penetrating moon hurled its grotesque images upon the wall and floor,—but with each intruding cloud the room resumed its former pallor. A cool breeze rustled a few fallen leaves beyond, and now and then tore one or two from the bending tree nearby. For some unperceived reason these falling leaves seemed to convey a secret yet confiding message. They pretended to have an essential influence in producing the effect I would describe. On the morrow these leaves would be trampled and shrivelled into the ground from whence they came, never to bloom again . . . so with all transitory things!

THE INEVITABLE

But surely I should not deceive myself. It was now evident that I was not alone in the retreat I had thought so secluded. Across the room in the massive chair formerly occupied by my uncle, now deceased, reposed the arrogant figure of Death. At first I was not conscious of this unearthly presence, but then to my untold apprehension Death coveted the scene and stripped the very aspect of the room into nakedness!

Still this was not Death's first visit to our retiring cloister. One year ago tonight while a rampant storm had raged without, I beheld his alien visage for the first time when he beckoned to my uncle. Death could not have come untimely to him for he was "fit" to die! He had yielded up his noble spirit so calmly to the triumphant invader that none of us would admit at first that he was dead, so quietly that his passing was only an instant and tranquil cession of life's movement. In its action it was peaceable and natural that we who remained to mourn, gazed at the occurrence with wonder and unbelief. The face of Death we recognized at once with a terrible sense of recognition that told us that we were unwilling to admit that the tyrant had come. Surely this solemn conqueror had a quality of terror, majesty and grandeur! It was he who stole mortal life away, blotting out the good or evil past, transforming our mortality to the inevitable dust from whence it came, never to bloom or live again.

But tonight I could only gaze at him in awe, my fear intermingled with humility,—lonely, silent and afraid. He drew closer to me. My heart was filled with a wild exultant spirit which burst the limits of the little room, knowing no stop of time or lonely distances. Death seemed to be taking me into his confidence! At once I could understand what

THE QUARTERLY

before had appeared so appalling. Death was as the foreshadowing of life. We die that we may die no more. Our short sleep past, we wake eternally into the sunlight of God's morning. Death was then, merely the dark medium through which we passed into the everlasting Kingdom of God.

"This life of mortal breath is but a suburb
Of the life elysian whose portal we call death."

—*Longfellow*

Suddenly Death seized my hand and led me out beyond the darkness of the room into the brightness of the moon. On and on we majestically swept through the shadows until we reached the summit of a great hill where, with one glance, we observed an immense playground with all its crowded and various life. Out on that vast expanse rose the buildings, the stores, the factories, the taverns, the pleasure palaces where men worked, bought, sold, traded, ate, drank, hated, loved, lived, and died. There, too, were the million hopes, ideals, and dreams that mortals thought eternal. In all its worthless glory we beheld the ancient playground that men called the world. And in its million lanes and passages were these men who are born, grow old and die.

They seldom hear the call of the dust. They are so intent they think their moment lasts forever—they scarcely see themselves stagger and grow old. They never listen to the unchanging voice of time that lives in the earth they trod, in the air they breathe, in the sky that ranges over their heads. Time never pauses, no matter what men live or die. Its echoing voice is distant and remote, and yet it has all the sound and fury of million-noted life within its murmur.

Proudly Death manifested to me the extent of his per-

THE INEVITABLE

vading vision, even to the utmost extremities of the playground. With all its fine buildings, lofty towers, stately boulevards, gay lights, and the noisy "humdrum" of its civilization—it nevertheless was dusty!

Soon these mortals would no longer roam the playground. The hours, the days, within their reach were sacred, for Death would inevitably find his way to each of them and demand their worth in accumulated values. If only men would live before they die as they will wish they had when Death encounters them!

"How shocking must thy summons be
O Death to him that is at ease in his possessions;
Who counting on long years of pleasure here
Is quite unfurnished for the world to come!

—*Blair*

He is always near. Out upon the highway day or night, at work or play, during all the stages of existence or surrounded by the solitude of our retreats, we must be ready and prepared to entertain him if we expect him as a friend.

Alarmed at the aspect of the worldly scene, I wanted to run and warn these poor creatures. I called! I shouted! I cried! But there was only a bleakness, an unredeemed dreariness of thought. Death, the insoluble mystery, the thunderous silence which invades and rebukes the pattern of our worldly existence, had breathed upon the subconscious inroads of my mind. He had evidently joined me for some brief moments of eternity—but only in the space of accountable time, and as suddenly as he had come, he had vanished.

The Quarterly

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Editorial

HAVE YOU A COMPLEX?

To the casual reader this title may hold an unpleasant similarity to one well-known and well-bemoaned example of radio advertising running something like this: Are you suffering? Do you have arthritis in your feet, lumbago in your back, rheumatism in your joints, sciatica in your legs, neuralgia in your fingers? If you have, why not try——— and suffer no longer."

No, this writer has no panacea, no proprietary nostrum that will work miraculous cures, that will dissolve a complex in a teaspoonful of wonder-working liquid.

And although the nerve diseases mentioned may attack any part of the body, we are more concerned with that which works its way into the mind. Complexes inflame the mental processes as neuritis inflames the nerves. Disturbing to that evanescent and sought-after something, the personality, complexes are apt to develop into phobias.

To be scientific, psychologically the term is used in reference to any repressed emotional state. Most common is the "inferiority complex", which is used indiscriminately, to label every other person in the world. I do not intend to render a series of profound reflections on the merits of being either an introvert or an extrovert, vague as such terms are. So if my reader be a Casper Milquetoast, let him rationalize with himself. I dub myself no psychoanalyst.

"Everything happens to me!" Trite and time-worn, this phrase is probably the one cliché heard most on college campuses. And the question: Have you a complex? is directed to college girls, the girls of New Rochelle. We are

THE QUARTERLY

bent towards uttering that sentence which leaves the lips so readily when annoying happenings disrupt our routine bliss.

Logically the irrationality of the complex,—for it is a complex as surely as one is that has been built up against peaches by eating too many of them,—is very easily demonstrated. For the very fact that everyone feels that she and only she bears the problems of the world proves readily that the statement is one of conceit as well as stupidity.

My one point is this: no matter how many complexes she may have, should she be timid, superior, sophisticated; should she faint at touching fur, walk on the right side of the street, the College of New Rochelle girl has no complex, no difficulty in determining the quality of the institution where she lives, mentally if not physically.

With the new Dean we have, who has shown her determination and her desire to make New Rochelle a top ranking college by her zeal, her sensitivity to the problems of campus life, her sympathy: no girl who has accepted this life as her mode of existence could have a complex. Especially dear to the QUARTERLY staff which has known her indispensable moderation for many years is Mother Thomas Aquinas. We know that the freshmen have four delightful years to aspire to under her leadership. And as seniors we would not be human if we did not feel a tinge of envy.

No one is more miserable than a man with a complex. The girl of the College of New Rochelle is not miserable, could never approach that state. But one word of warning: a complex may develop into a phobia, taking things for granted leads to indifference, indifference leads to discontent. And taking things for granted is one of the fruits of sophistication.

SHIRLEY FITZGERALD

— And If You're Reading

CATHOLIC ANTHOLOGY

. . . *over the bent World*. By SISTER MARY LOUISE, S.L.
SHEED AND WARD, N. Y. 1939. 767 pages.

The book's bulk may be either frightening or beckoning—according to one's propensity for reading, but Sister Mary Louise has compiled an anthology of definite merit, taste, and distinction in . . . *over the bent World*. And as each section comprises a whole in itself, and is widely divergent in its material, probably the best way to read for enjoyment and enlightenment is to follow individual will.

No doubt Gerard Manly Hopkins' sonnet "God's Grandeur" which is used as the title poem, was both the inspiration for her work and the logical divisions of content: Poetry, Satire, Biography, and History, Criticism, Essay and Miscellaneous, Hagiography, and Foreign Influences.

Take for example the basically religious and philosophical poetry offered, in view of the lines,

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;"

and you will wonder at and remember the nostalgic sweetness of Alfred Barret's "Mint by Night", and the flickering strength of his poem, "The Candle". The gentle beauty of Padraic Colum's "A Cradle Song" is there side by side with old friends from G. K. Chesterton, Hillaire Belloc, Leonard Feeney, Maurice Baring and James Daly. Striking in their facility of expression, intensity, depth and freshness are the few representative poems of Robert Farren and Sister M. Madeleva.

But we looked for Clifford Laube and George Schuster,

THE QUARTERLY

more of Feeney and Daly, and found them lacking. This selective poetry, perhaps, would have presented a more concrete and pertinent pattern had more emphasis been placed on American modern development. As it is, there is a certain fineness and obviously deep appreciation of that chosen. Sister Mary Louise, we feel, has given us poems that she loves, that she would like to read to us if we were her friends . . . thoughts and a beauty she has marvelled at, and that she would like us to delight in too. This is the charm of the whole anthology. Representative of this same feeling, the prose is more far-reaching in its depth, scholarly basis and ultimate purpose of glorifying our Mother, the Church.

The Biography and History treat notably of Damien the Leper, Elizabeth Seton, Pugin, Erasmus, Prince Charlie, Wolsey, The Wilfred Wards and the Transition, and The Spirit of the Oxford Movement. The sketches are not long and are varied enough to interest any taste. Particularly good is the material in Hagiography and Foreign Influences. Work by Jorgensen, Claudel, Undset, Maritain, Bremond, and Mauraic is there; and essays on St. Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Ignatius, Joan of Arc, and Thomas Campion.

The articles of Criticism are for the most part contributions by the same authors—Baring, Daly, Chesterton, Colum and Sargent. Sister Mary Louise has also included a section on Satire, which with the exceptions of "On Humor and Satire" by Richard A. Knox and D. B. Wyndham-Lewis's "Diverstissement: A Christmas Morality", might easily have been omitted to afford space for a more constructive, creative type of prose or poetry.

DOROTHY ZWIER

—AND IF YOU'RE READING

GOBLINS AND PAGODAS.

Selected Poems . . . By JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

FARRAR & RINEHART, INC. N. Y. 1939.

In the roster of names belonging to the now dissolved group of Imagist writers, John Gould Fletcher holds a prominent position as well as the distinction of being one of America's foremost poets. Some writers place him third, with Amy Lowell and H.O. his only predecessors in the height of mastery of the poetic art. We find Robert Frost, Vachel Lindsay, Edna St. Vincent Millay . . . all art imagists.

Beginning with his "Irradiations" and "Sand and Spray" this collection presents all of his poems from 1913 to the present day as an organic whole. His early poems show a startling and stirring flare for color, a sense of tint and shade that seems miraculous. True, these first pieces were experimental, but although color tones are used almost recklessly, the effect is amazing.

Even though you may find his vermilions, his swaying palanquins, his "mandarin movements" confusing, I am willing to wager you will never call him dull. A challenge are his brilliant metaphors . . . a challenge that is as hard and clear as his verse is definite. His goblins, his color symphonies, his pagodas, give the devout imagist poet a sense of buoyance that charms the mind and the mind's eye. If "smoke-blue lilacs," cloud and tree in clash of storm, animation run rampant, have any thrill for you, to read these poems will be more than a pleasure.

SHIRLEY FITZGERALD

THE QUARTERLY

JOURNALISTIC WOMAN OF YESTERDAY

The Flowing Stream. By FLORENCE FINCH KELLY.

E. P. DUTTON & Co., NEW YORK. 1939. 560 pp.

On the crest of a wave of fiction and history of the nineteenth and early twentieth century America, comes Florence Finch Kelly's autobiography. The title is pleasant but the sub-title, "The Story of Fifty-Six Years on American Newspaper Life," is a better clue to the contents. For Mrs. Kelly is a journalist, a member of that fearless, undaunted, pioneer group that has carved a place for women in journalism. So from this vantage point, the reader watches America growing, being whipped into present form by the spirit of its citizens, by their controversies and campaigns.

Although the life of the author is the nucleus of this activity, one closes the book with the satisfaction of a completed history of America and American journalism. But because of this fact Mrs. Kelly states the events of her life simply and flatly without describing the accompanying emotions so necessary to give the book a personal note, to make it hers alone.

The early chapters describe the transformation of middle-western barrenness into American civilization and fertility under the strong hands and brave hearts of the frontiersmen. As a child, Mrs. Kelly was a part of the western movement, and her description of the pioneer feeling, the scenery, is vivid and inspiring.

Her life is in tune with America. As the nation spread and developed, the Finches helped its progress; when youth clamored for education, Florence Finch was there with her cry; America was gingerly feeling its way into new professions and enterprises; she was beginning a long steady climb of her own. Florence Finch and her husband, Allen

Kelly, shared in Boston's first glitter of fame; roamed California's undeveloped coast, watching San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego assume their first crude forms. The Kellys lived in New Mexico, were among the first few to recognize that region's vast potentialities as ranch country and grain belt. But New York City's siren song had enticed her many years, and at the age of fifty, she settled near Riverside Drive—"It was the first time in my life since I was seven, that I had ever lived more than two consecutive years under the same roof."

This book is guaranteed to revert the reader's interest from the Woman of Tomorrow to the Woman of Yesterday. Was she a type peculiar to the last generation, possessed of enormous vitality and initiative that we shall not see again? Or did Mrs. Kelly's overwhelming desire to succeed in journalism light a fire under her feet and make her only what any young ambitious woman would be today?

Had she omitted the detail of her political campaigning, her repeated trips through the wilderness and her lengthy opinions on capital and labor, we would not have the opportunity to admire her so or to wonder at her mind, but her book would have been far more readable. Mrs. Kelly briefly sums what we are anxious to hear and reports at length the less interesting phases of her life.

But the book is well-written; the words clipped and carefully chosen, and Mrs. Kelly's style evinces the tenseness acquired through fifty-six years of journalism. To young journalists this should be "eating and drinking," with Mrs. Kelly their ideal.

For other readers, *The Flowing Stream* should be taken with a deep chair and a fireside some cold night and draw inspiration from these reminiscences for their own "flowing stream of life."

VIRGINIA CRONAN

THE QUARTERLY

SOFT SPOKEN HARMONY

Selected Poems. By SISTER M. MADELEVA.

MACMILLAN COMPANY, N. Y. 1939.

Had not the excellent magazine of poetry, *Spirit*, made it a practice of printing the excellent poems of Sister M. Madeleva, who is one of its vice-presidents, we would have become acquainted with her through other means. For her work has been in *America*, *Commonweal*, and other Catholic papers of note.

Her verses are far from unfamiliar to us, for which we are grateful, since she has a lyric gift that is most refreshing. Criticism of the magazine *Spirit* has been adverse as well as favorable, but it can never be said that the work of this poet lacks being completely satisfying to the reader, no matter how casual. If simplicity and clarity have any power to claim rewards, her verse certainly reaches the peak of delightful reading.

The external form of her poetry may run the gamut from quatrain to sonnet, but a sparkling style, a lilting voice is always there. To be able to project oneself so completely and yet so subtly into one's creation should be the goal of any writer of value. At least, this is true in poetry which has its appeal for man because written there are the disturbing thoughts, the minutest reflections, the most elusive, that the average man has, but which he cannot himself express.

Father Francis X. Connolly has told us that is the poet's duty to give joy, not to wallow in the mud of the morbid or the depressing. "Joy comes through contemplation, through a contact with being which is, at least for the moment, shorn of its immediacy, from its threat to our secur-

ity or our happiness or our future. The modern poet lacks this contemplative experience, this ability to derive emotional energy and power and to use it in his own creation. He betrays poetry because he is unwilling to give us anything of himself."

Although Sister M. Madeleva is indeed "modern" in the sense of time, she does not, nor could not fall under this indictment of the modern poet. For surely she has caught that ephemeral power, that will-o'-the-wisp if you will, that is the faculty for setting down her fruits of contemplation and giving of herself in the creation.

If you enjoy reading the thoughts, moods and experiences of one to whom life is joyous, is beautiful, you will never begrudge the time spent in the lyrical company of this fine poet. And perhaps "The Pepper Tree" will make you smile with wonder at its originality as it did me.

SHIRLEY FITZGERALD

FICTION WITH LAUGHTER

The Brandons. By ANGELA THIRKELL.

ALFRED A. KNOFF, NEW YORK. 1939.

If the English have no sense of humor, Angela Thirkell must furnish the exception that proves the rule. With her latest contribution to the gaiety afforded by light fictionists, she has justified her talent with a considerable amount of literary style and knowledge of human relations. The English atmosphere and setting provide a delightful background for this unhurried and meandering story of "The Brandons" amidst their amusing difficulties.

The plot of the novel is relatively simple and obvious and, accordingly, rather lacking in suspense. Nevertheless, a certain charm lies in its easy tempo and in the graciousness

THE QUARTERLY

of its heroine, Lavinia Brandon, who is genuinely appealing despite her scatter brains. We are at once touched and diverted with the harmless vanities of the "would-be" intellectual society that constantly invades the Brandon home. Here a dozen characters of the first magnitude are sketched with distinctive, natural, and wholesomely humorous qualities.

The entire book is alive with the enthusiasm of the lovable Lavinia whose wits are well seasoned in the art of matchmaking. Especially comical are her endeavors to play Cupid to the pious church master, Mr. Miller, and the retiring Miss Morris, endeavors which add a dash of romance. Lavinia herself is an excellent player at "the enchanting game of heart-whole flirtation" with her affected manners and coquetry, not for a moment deceiving her "grown up" children Francis and Delia who are well aware of their mother's good natured artificialities. She had only married their late father because she could not be sufficiently disobliging to cause him the annoyance or even the inconvenience of a refusal! Death had released her . . . but there still remained the botheration of his crochety Aunt Sissie, who hovered over the heads of her nearest kin, a loathsome legacy. The personal affairs and problems of each relative all tie up in a captivating account with immensely diverting overtones.

The Brandons has prodigiously entertained an overwhelmingly large number of readers including the Book of the Month Club as a brimming edition of unassuming wit! As a rule, no matter how laughable the situations may be in the book you hold in your hand, if it be a public place in which you are reading, your countenance betrays nothing of the roaring mirth in your brain; I attempted to read Mrs. Thirkell's publication of intelligent nonsense in the

—AND IF YOU'RE READING

library and came near to being ejected. No one has the right to be so funny!

MARILYN BROPHY

LIFE IN CRISES

Reaching for the Stars. By NORA WALN.

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY. 1939.

What was the life in the Rhineland during the years of 1934-1939? What the life in Vienna, in Czechoslovakia, in Dresden during those eventful years? Nora Waln answers these questions in *Reaching for the Stars*.

Miss Waln is qualified through actual observation to inform us on these matters. She traveled to Germany with her music-loving husband who desired to visit the homeland of many of the great composers. There they confronted the powerful machine of the National Socialist Party. Complete organization, prolific propaganda, exacting but unethical legality are all part of their system. One is forced to admire the intelligence, the adroitness, and the fortune with which the "game of chess" has been played.

The people there are very conscious of their situation. The name of their *Führer*, the existence of the Third Reich is constantly flung upon their senses. They live in a highly systematized, indoctrinated society; and yet, with all this emphasis on the masses, on utility for one end only—the State, there is individuality. There is kindness as well as bitterness. There is that warmth experienced by the righteous; there is even gaiety. There is that individuality which is within and which no one can rule.

The revelation of the authentic reactions of the oppressed constructs one of the most engrossing sections of the

THE QUARTERLY

book. Some have faith in the *Dritte Reich*; others have bitterness for it. Some do not know. But all must obey with a precision almost impossible for human beings.

A smattering of history enriches the account. The purpose of the historical allusions is to present a possible atonement for the point of view of the Nazi leaders. This element of atonement makes this exposé a little different from the usual type. The author produces facts without coloring. If the situation is to be condemned, the facts speak and not the author. If the situation is to be justified, the facts, the people in that situation, justify it. It is difficult to be one-sided even in the selection of facts. Miss Waln attempted to do this and succeeded.

However, in viewing the make-up of the German people, the people enveloped in the circumstances of that situation, Miss Waln does take a definite stand.

She recognizes a universal quality in all humans—the quality of goodness. She admits Naziism is materialistic, but she refuses to write that Germans are materialists. She is confident in the ability, the capacity of this people. She has confidence in their future.

"In ages past the Germans have reached so high in getting truth for mankind that they have touched the stars. They have brought down to us gifts beyond estimation. That contribution is not ended." Nora Waln visualizes the Germans as "reaching for the stars," and she writes to the world that the "reach" will not be in vain.

CLARA RISOLI

A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question. By JACQUES MARITAIN.

LONGMANS GREEN & Co. N. Y. 1939.

When an eminent philosopher turns his attention from

abstract metaphysical speculations to a concrete social problem, men of the world are apt to be sceptical of the results. Jacques Maritain, however, in his treatment of the Jewish question, shows himself well able to deal with the tangible as well as the intangible. The philosophical tendencies of his mind account for his deep, almost mystical, understanding of the Jewish people. At the same time, he undeniably possesses a practical faculty which enables him to see clearly the social and economic aspects of the subject.

Maritain's approach is realistic. He admits that a definite problem exists. Especially in countries like Poland, where large Jewish minorities lived in segregated groups with their own schools, languages, and customs, are difficulties apt to occur. But anti-Semitism is not the solution. Moreover, it precludes any solution, as it destroys the sympathy and understanding necessary for an adjustment between conflicting groups. It is a kind of red herring, used to divert men's minds from the real task that lies before them—that of economic and social reconstruction.

Anti-Semitism builds its case on a number of trite and specious generalizations. The Jews, it is said, promote pornographic literature and white slavery; they are at the same time Bolshevists and monopolists; they are plotting to seize world power and to conduct a ruthless massacre of Christians. Having indicated the absurdity of these and other accusations, Maritain proceeds to discuss a complaint that we hear with increasing frequency in our own country. We protest that the Jews tend to overcrowd the liberal professions; we maintain that their activity in these fields should be restricted. With admirable good sense, Maritain points out that if Christians wish to secure a fair proportion of professional positions, the only ethical and sporting course is to work for it—to perfect their abilities so that capacity

THE QUARTERLY

for service will be equal to that of the Jews. Very often it is inertia and love of ease on the part of many Christians, in contrast to the ambition and industry of the Jews, that accounts for their lack of success.

The Polish people are reproached, as Catholics and as a people that have themselves suffered so much persecution, for their "pogroms" against the Jews. In Germany, anti-Jewish sentiment has been converted into racism, described by Maritain as the "one of the worst materialistic mockeries of man". His account of the cold-blooded brutality of the Nazis toward Jews and Jewish sympathizers is quiet and detached; it is not, however, apt to have a quieting effect on the reader.

Since anti-Semitism is not the solution of the Jewish problem, we must look elsewhere for it. Maritain believes that no real solution can be reached until the final great reconciliation between Israel and Christ is effected. In the meanwhile, however, something must be done to alleviate the suffering of the Jewish people. Emigration, while desirable, will afford only temporary relief. Our staunchest endeavors must be made in the field of the human heart and mind, by implanting there attitudes of justice and charity which will bear fruit in appropriate action.

Maritain's book deserves high praise as a logical and objective exposition of a question that ordinarily evokes both emotionality and bias. It is a far cry from the petty name-calling and crude violence that characterize this controversy on the street to the sane counsels and lofty recommendations of a man who urges his fellowmen to "put their trust in love and truth alone".

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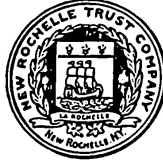
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